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CONFIDENTIAL.

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424

Part 1

PAPERS

RELATING TO THE

CONDITION

OF

CHRISTIANS IN TURKEY.

August to October, 1860.

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F.O. 424
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CONFIDENTIAL.

Papers relating to the Condition of Christians in Turkey.

No. 1.

Acting Consul Abbott to Lord J. Russell.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 24.)

My Lord, *Monastir, July* 9, 1860.

IN compliance with instructions from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith inclosed, copies of a despatch and its inclosure, which I have this day addressed to Sir Henry Bulwer in answer to his Excellency's two circular despatches of the 11th of June last, relative to the condition of the Christians in Turkey.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RICHARD GEO. ABBOTT.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

Acting Consul Abbott to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Monastir, July* 9, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's two circular despatches of the 11th of June last, relative to the condition of the Christians in Turkey, and I beg to transmit herewith inclosed, answers to the twenty-five Queries contained in the latter circular despatch.

I venture respectfully to state to your Excellency that from my knowledge of Turkey and its inhabitants, I firmly believe that, notwithstanding any privileges and advantages which may be granted to the Christians, these, although apparently satisfied at first, will never desist from complaining eventually of the Turkish yoke, and making their complaints reach the ear of European Powers, magnifying to a great degree, as is their usual habit, any injustice to which they may have been subjected by Mussulmans.

With Russia, on one side, holding out to the Bulgarians the prospects of an independent nation, and with Greece, on the other, promising to the Greeks their union with the mother country, it is difficult, and I may even say impossible, to eradicate the hatred of such deep root as that which at present exists between Christians and Mussulmans.

As long as these two countries continue to maintain the policy that they have hitherto pursued, the Christian element in Turkey will ever evince a disaffection for its Ottoman rulers, howsoever great may be the privileges and advantages conceded to it.

It is since the Russian campaign of 1829, that the Bulgarians have felt a sympathy for Russia, looking up to her as their future liberator, and believing that Russia was sincere, when, in opening her campaigns against Turkey, she ostensibly declared that those campaigns were undertaken for the delivery of her coreligionists from Ottoman persecution and from an infidel yoke.

The Bulgarians, of course, ignorant of her real motives, and full of the Panslavistic notions infused in them by Russian emissaries, have continued to feel that same sympathy and love for a country whose religion is alike, whose

language is derived from the same source, and whose indefatigableness, in their eyes, for their cause is so great, besides enriching their monasteries and their churches with liberal gifts.

The Bulgarians and Greeks have only to look back to ten, fifteen, and twenty years, when, with justice, they might have complained of the burden of their thraldom; but now, how great is the difference! And yet, never satisfied with what they have, they look forward to their emancipation—an emancipation which, on the one hand, will make them the slaves of a despotic Government in the hands of rapacious functionaries; and on the other, the subjects of a Kingdom too poor to maintain itself, and where agriculture and manufactures are abandoned for the pursuit of pedantic studies.

In giving my humble opinion on this subject, I am far from taking the part of the Turks, and exonerating the conduct of some of the Turkish officials. Abuses, and to a great extent, exist in this Province as well as in others, and the evils caused by these abuses are of such a nature as to admit of remedy.

For instance, a Pasha is apparently an honest man, but his Kehaya or Intendant is venal, and then the inhabitants have to suffer from the rapacity of a man whose advice has so much deliberative power with the Pasha, who, perhaps indolent and weak, allows himself to be influenced by an unprincipled man in whom he has entire confidence.

Then come, next, the Beys who sit in the Medjlisses. Natives of the place where they hold their office, and with great local interests to protect, they connive, for a trifle, at illegal acts, if, by doing so, their interests are in any way promoted, and hence affix their seals to decisions which have not the slightest particle of justice.

As to the Christian members, they take their seats at the Medjlisses as a matter of form, but dare not dissent from an opinion emitted by the Mussulman members. I hear that some years back the Christian member of the Medjliss at Monastir was poisoned for opposing his Mussulman colleagues.

Amongst the Beys of the category above alluded to, I may mention Halil Bey, the principal member of the Medjliss, who, owing to his wealth illegally amassed and to his influence in the country, carries on, it may be said, the administration of this Province. He is prejudiced against foreigners; and he is a bad enemy and a faithless friend to those of the mercantile and labouring classes who dare act in opposition to his will.

I would venture to suggest that both he, and his tool, Yussuf Yazigy, the self-constituted President of the Tijaret (Commercial Tribunal), should be removed, and prevented from ever holding any public office at Monastir.

In the subordinate branches of administration, there is, I am sorry to say, great avidity for money shown by the lower officials. This comes from the paltry salaries that Government awards them; salaries which cannot keep them alive, were they not to increase them by unjust means.

Great complaints are also made of the Multezims, to whom the revenues of the Province are farmed out every year. It is asserted by the peasantry that these Multezims and their employés levy, generally speaking, twice and thrice as much as they ought, thus reducing the contributors of these tithes to great pressure.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RICHARD GEO. ABBOTT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Queries and Answers respecting the Condition of Christians in Turkey.

Queries.	*Answers.*
1. WHAT is the general condition of the province over which your jurisdiction extends?	1. THE general condition of this province is not so good as might be expected. The inhabitants are contented with the laws they are governed by, but, generally speaking, not with the functionaries in whose hands is the authority of the Porte.

Queries.	*Answers.*
2. What is the relative population, Christian and Mussulman, as far as your information enables you to pass an opinion, within the said province?	2. The Eyalet or Pashalic of Monastir is divided into three provinces, viz., Monastir, Ochrida, and Georteha. The approximate number of inhabitants is: in Monastir, 1,000,000; in Ochrida, 750,000; and in Georteha, 800,000. In Monastir, the Christians are 75 to 25 Mussulmans; in Ochrida, 45 to 55; and in Georteha, 34 to 66; *i. e.*, about 1,359,500 Christians, and 1,190,500 Mussulmans, on an average in the whole Eyalet.
3. What is, generally speaking, apart from religion, the occupation and position in life of the Christians on the one hand, and of the Mussulmans on the other; for instance, are the great bulk of proprietors in the country Mussulmans? Are the majority of persons engaged in trade in the towns Christians?	3. The Mussulmans form the great bulk of proprietors in the country; and the Christians form the great majority of persons engaged in trade in the towns.
4. Can Christians hold landed property on equal condition with Turks; and if not, where is the difference?	4. Yes.
5. Can Christians exercise trade in towns on equal terms with the Turks; and if not, where is the difference?	5. Yes.
6. Are the Christian peasantry in the Christian villages as well off generally as the Mussulmans; and if not, where is the difference?	6. No; the Mussulmans, being the chief proprietors, hire Christian labourers, to whom they advance, for wages, &c., more money than they can possibly pay, and at high interest. They then get so entangled with their Mussulman creditors, who are merciless in their demands, that they have frequently to work all their lives for them, or sell the little landed property they may possess, to extinguish their debts. On the other hand, the Mussulmans make it a point to buy off all land in the hands of Christians.
7. Is Christian evidence admitted in Courts of Justice; and if not, point out the cases where it has been refused?	7. It is only admitted at the Tahkik Medjlis (Court of Inquiry). There, Christian witnesses are sworn, whereas Mussulman are not. I cannot point out cases where it has been refused at the other Courts, as, it being considered an established rule not to admit Christian evidence, a Christian has never dared present in a suit one of his co-religionists to give his testimony.
8. Is the Christian population, on the whole, better off, more considered, and better treated, than it was five, ten, fifteen, twenty years ago?	8. Undoubtedly it is.
9. Are there any inequalities dependent on religion now, and if so, what are those inequalities?	9. Yes. Christian evidence is not admitted in all the Courts of Justice. Christians are withheld from filling high ranks, such as Governors or Generals.
10. Would the Christian population like to enter the military service instead of paying the tax which procures them	10. Christians would prefer entering the army instead of paying the exemption tax, provided they were formed

Queries.

exemption; and which would they gain most by, serving in the army, or paying the said tax?

11. Do Christians find any difficulty in constructing churches, or in following their religious observances?

12. When cases of oppression against the Christians take place, is this generally owing to the acts of the Government, or the fanaticism of the population?

13. When Protestants are, if ever, persecuted, does that persecution proceed from Mussulmans, or from Christians or other sects?

14. Are many of the grievances of which the Christian population complains owing to the conduct of their own authorities?

15. Are Christians admitted into the Medjlis or Local Councils? Are these Councils generally more in favour of progress and good government than the officials of the Porte, or more unfavourable?

16. If the latter, would there be any practical mode that occurs to you of limiting their attributes, so as still to

Answers.

into separate regiments, and were held out the prospect of advancing as much as Mussulmans would in similar positions. If this were the case, they would gain most by serving in the army.

11. No. They simply have to pay a fee of about 3,000 piastres for the firman authorising them to construct a church. If more than that sum is expended, it is owing to the dishonesty of the Turkish Commissioners sent on the spot to measure the ground and point out the proportions of the edifice, who extort bribes from the Christians, in order that in their report to the Pasha they should raise no objections as to the building of that particular church. Christians, moreover, are not allowed to have bells in their churches.

12. It is generally owing to the acts of the Government officials and to bad administration.

13. There are no Protestants in this province; but if there were, and were persecuted, I believe, that the persecution would come from the Christians from whose church they had seceded.

14. Sometimes it is owing to the conduct of their own authorities. The Christian member of the Medjlis being a nonentity, and not allowed to differ in his opinion from his Mussulman colleagues, is unable to come forward and protect his co-religionists from any act of injustice.

15. Christians are admitted into the Medjlis. I have explained in Answer 14 their powerless position. These Councils, generally speaking, are not in favour of progress and good government, the principal members forming them being Beys who take their seats as members thereof, on account of their position and influence in the country. For instance, if a Pasha arrives at Monastir with intentions to carry on a good administration, he is tied down by these members who, having great local interests, try to shield this or that party guilty of crime from punishment. The Pasha being, therefore, unable to act independently, and obliged to refer everything to these Beys for their sanction, it is utterly impossible that he can act with justice and equity.

16 and 17. At Monastir there are four Medjlises and the Cadi's Court of Justice, viz., the Medjlissi-Kebir (Grand

Queries.

maintain their power where it is useful, and abridge or suppress it where it is not?

17. What is your opinion as to withdrawing from the said Medjlis their judicial functions, and creating tribunals apart from them; and in such case how would you have those tribunals composed?

Answers.

Council), the Tijaret Medjlis (Commercial Council), the Tahkik Medjlis (Court of Inquiry), the Nuwakat Medjlis (Provisional or Criminal Council), and the Mahkemeh (a Court where the Cadi acts as sole Judge, and tries cases according to the precepts of the Koran).

The Medjlisi-Kebir is formed of the Pasha, the Cadi (Judge), Mufti (High-Priest), seven Turkish members, one Christian, the Greek Archbishop, and one Hebrew representative.

The Tijaret Medjlis is composed of three Mussulman members, four Christian, and one Hebrew;

The Tahkik Medjlis of six Mussulmans and two Christians;

The Nuwakat Medjlis of six Mussulmans and one Christian.

I would beg to suggest that the Medjlisi-Kebir be altogether abolished, and independent action given to the Pasha, who should have the option and power of referring to any of the other Courts any cases which he does not feel competent to decide himself; and on the other hand, if the Pasha be found a delinquent, that he should be recalled immediately, and prevented from holding any other public office.

That the Tijaret Medjlis, the Tahkik Medjlis, and the Nuwakat Medjlis, should be formed of respectable and trustworthy persons, annually elected by votes. That each person having an income of 50*l.* should have the power to vote; and that the number of Mussulman and Christian members at these Medjlises should be in proportion to the respective populations.

That these members, before entering upon their duties, should be duly sworn; and that their decisions should be guided by a code of laws, some of which have already been framed, but are not put into execution. That this code be translated into the Greek language. That the foreign Consuls in the different towns of Turkey (if this is not considered impugning the integrity of the Ottoman Empire) should be made honorary members of these Councils, without, however, any deliberative power, but merely as auditors, and ready to give their advice, if required to do so, by the President of the Council.

This plan, I think, would be a great check on the local authorities, who would not then dare act in contravention to instructions and established laws.

Queries.

Answers.

With reference to the Court of Mahkemeh, I think that this Court should be still allowed to exist, with its same attributes; because, if put aside, it would hurt too much the feelings of true Mussulmans.

I would propose that the Cadi should be made a salaried officer of the Crown, and not allowed to levy exorbitant fees here and there. That the cases tried in this Court should be limited to cases of landed property. That a law should, moreover, be passed, admitting the validity of a public document over the testimony of witnesses. I say this because it has hitherto been the custom of unprincipled litigants to produce Mussulman false witnesses, whose testimony annuls the validity of a document made in a public office. This illegal mode has often been the cause of dispossessing a rightful owner of his property. And, lastly, that the revenues of the province be collected by Government officers of well-proved honesty, and not farmed out to Armenian bankers and to Beys, who, in collecting them, commit excesses, and levy more than is their due share.

18. Do the Mahometans evince a strong desire to make converts? Do they do so frequently, or ever, by compulsion? If so, point out, if you can, the guilty parties.

18. When it is in their power to make converts, they willingly do so. I hear that it is generally by compulsion or intimidation. I cannot mention the guilty parties, as no conversions have taken place since my arrival here. The present Pasha of Monastir being very averse to this kind of proselytism, generally gives up the person so to be converted to the Greek Archbishop, and allows him freely to decide for himself as to the advisability of changing his religion. The present Pasha does this, notwithstanding a Vizirial Circular which has lately been addressed to the Pashas, ordering them to confine such converts in their konaks (official residences) until such time as they shall have made their declaration in favour of or against the Mahometan faith.

19. In the case of the conversion of females, is this generally the effect of religious enthusiasm on the one side or the other, or does it proceed from worldly causes? And, if the latter, state those causes.

19. Generally speaking, in the conversion of females, it is not the effect of religious enthusiasm; it proceeds from worldly causes, such as love, or exemption from military conscription. A custom prevails here to exempt from military conscription a Mussulman young man who elopes with a Christian girl, and whom he converts to his faith. This being considered a meritorious act for his religion, it entitles him, as a reward, to be freed from military service.

Queries.

Answers.

20. What measures do you think would best attain the end of equal justice, with the most simple and least expensive forms?

20. To frame a Code of Laws on some European Code. To admit Christian evidence indiscriminately in all Courts of Justice. To swear the members of the different Councils or Courts mentioned in Answers 16 and 17. To raise the salaries of the subordinate officials; to reduce those of the Pashas; and to consign to condign punishment officials who may embezzle public money or receive bribes.

21. What measures do you think could best be taken to improve generally the condition of the country?

21. Besides those mentioned in Answers 16, 17, and 20, I would moreover suggest that the troops be regularly paid; that the police system be completely re-organized; that the policemen employed in the towns should be without arms, and their salaries raised from 60 to 250 piastres per month; that those employed in the country should be taken from the Rediffs of each village, with their pay and rations as if actually serving in the army; that some of these should be mounted, to scour the country and prevent brigandage, &c.

22. What is your opinion as to the possibility of establishing schools for all religions and classes, and as to the effect that would be produced by those schools?

22. Such schools could be established, and they would be productive of great good to the country, provided they were styled "Government Schools," and placed under the supervision of the Minister of Education at Constantinople. These schools would be the means of assembling the Christian and Mussulman children together, and inculcating in them an early friendship and regard for each other, thus supplying that want of sympathy which at present exists between the conquered and conquering races.

23. What is your opinion as to naming a Christian Vice-Governor by the side of the Turkish Governor, where a great part of the population is Christian; the one and the other corresponding with the Porte?

23. I think that this plan would not be a good one in places remote from the capital, and far away from the control of the Central Government. The Christian Vice-Governor, elate at being thrust into so high a position, his ambition would become unbounded and he himself unmanageable; and while considering his Mussulman colleague as his rival, will ever be intriguing against him.

24. How far do you think foreign agency has been and is at work to produce division and discontent amongst the different classes? State, if you can, instances.

24. Since my arrival here I have heard that two persons supposed to be Russian emissaries, and in the pay of Russia, were disseminating Panslavistic notions among the Bulgarians; but if ever such were the case, their field for action is not so great here as it is in the Provinces of Philippopolis and Adrianople, the centre of the Bulgarian element. I have heard also of frequent donations having been made by sup-

Queries.

Answers.

posed emissaries to the monasteries and churches. Portraits of the Emperor Alexander have, moreover, I am informed, been presented to the natives in the most solemn manner, thus making the ignorant believe that he is either a Saint or a demi-God.

I believe that apart from foreign agency, the wealthy and influential Bulgarians are Russian at heart, and their example is followed by the lower classes.

25. Is it become a custom for subjects of the Porte to get foreign passports? Do they frequently get passports from Greece, and exchange them for Russian passports?

25. I believe that the Greek authorities are generally very liberal with their passports; but with respect to the Greek Consul here, he does not pursue, I presume, the system followed by his colleagues elsewhere, and this, I suppose, from fear of endangering his relations with the local authorities, the Turkish Government having been very much averse to the appointment of a Greek Consul at Monastir. As to Russian passports, there are no persons in this Province, that I know of, the bearers of such patents; but in the neighbouring Provinces of Adrianople and Philippopolis, where there are Russian Consuls, I hear that it is the case.

Monastir, July 9, 1860.

(Signed) RICHARD GEO. ABBOTT.

No. 2.

Consul Calvert to Lord J. Russell.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 7.)

My Lord, *Salonica, July* 23, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, to your Lordship, a copy of my despatch, together with its inclosure, to Her Majesty's Ambassador at the Porte, in reply to a series of questions relating to the condition of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES J. CALVERT.

Inclosure 1 in No. 2.

Consul Calvert to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Salonica, July* 20, 1860.

I HAVE had the honour to receive, a few days previously to the termination of my duties as Her Majesty's Consul at Salonica, your Excellency's despatch marked Circular of the 11th of June last, together with the accompanying despatch of the same date, containing a series of questions in relation to the condition of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire; and as the subject of your Excellency's despatch is one the importance of which cannot be too highly magnified, and your Excellency is desirous of obtaining local knowledge in the matters in point, I have taken upon myself to reply to the questions referred to in the place of my successor, who has only newly arrived at his post.

I beg leave respectfully to transmit my answers herewith, in the form of an

inclosure, and I venture to offer in this despatch a few remarks suggested by the occasion.

My attention, as your Excellency will perceive, has been engrossed with the questions relating to the Local Councils. I have aimed at affording the Christians a fairer opportunity than they have hitherto had the privilege of enjoying, to deliberate on matters affecting their own interests, and of sharing with their rulers the responsibilities of the administration of justice when they themselves are concerned.

This could, I imagine, be achieved without weakening in the smallest degree the authority of the Porte; on the contrary, rather strengthening it by causing all local measures agreed to on the spot to be subject to its immediate cognizance and control, and by leaving, as heretofore, the executive power entirely in the hands of the Turkish functionaries.

The laws ought, however, to be codified and translated into the languages used in those parts of the country in which they are intended to be force, so that, when the Tribunals are erected, each class may know exactly what it has to expect, and that the laws they are governed by apply equally to the other classes.

By way of gathering opinions from every part of the Empire, temporary Provincial Councils might be organized on the representative system. The projected laws could be submitted to those Councils for debate before they were definitively established by the Central Government; so that errors and omissions could be rectified, and if found unsuited to any particular locality the cause of the inapplicability of any one law would be at once brought under the Porte's notice.

The composition of the existing Medjlises, or local Councils, is manifestly defective; and if less progress has been made than might have been expected towards accomplishing the objects of the Edict of Gulhané, I ascribe the blame, in great part, to these Councils. Once the principle of equally-proportioned representation of mixed interests has been established and honestly maintained by the Porte's functionaries, it will be the fault of the Christians if they decline to avail themselves of the advantages held out to them. In the provinces it might be difficult at present to find a sufficient number of educated Christians to fill all the places that would be open to them. But I do expect that enough patriotism is left in the breasts of those Christians who have emigrated from this country to Europe, where they have become enlightened and wealthy, to induce their return to the land of their birth in order to occupy the positions at their command that would enable them to benefit their less favoured countrymen.

There are, no doubt, amongst such emigrants many who hold to exaggerated notions of nationality and political freedom, and who, being infected with extreme opinions, imagine that the only meet time for their action is when the decisive movement for final independence has fairly commenced. Whenever, if ever, that event takes place, the Christians in Turkey ought to be better prepared for liberty than they are in their present condition.

It is, unfortunately, an historical fact that during several centuries the Christians have been sorely oppressed. As their moral degradation has through this long period of oppression become hereditary, so their elevation to a higher standard of social and political worth will only be attained progressively through successive generations after the removal of the oppression. As yet, there has scarcely been one generation since the first step has been taken towards it.

Nevertheless, the condition of the Christians is, in this province at least, by no means so intolerable as it has been depicted by the Russian Government; and although I must admit that it is not, on the whole, as satisfactory as I could wish it to be, it cannot be disputed that the Christians are far better off now than they were some years ago. The greater part of the floating capital, and almost all the trade, of the country is in their hands, whilst, on the other hand, the Turks have been decimated by the conscription, and Mussulman artificers and tradesmen return after their period of military service to find their places occupied by Christians.

In the meantime the Christians have been distracted by too many conflicting external influences. Young Greece, in the south, disseminating the seeds of its scarcely gathered liberty, and Russia, in the north, working through the sympathies of a common creed,—neither the one nor the other have taught the Christians how they might improve themselves by reforming the abuses of their

own Church, which it is clearly not the office of the Turkish Government to do. Russia, it is true, has taken upon herself to reform the Eastern Church in Roumelia, but in a selfish way which betrays partiality and has produced division. Russia and Greece have, in fact, both of them, their peculiar objects in view, and their professions of sympathy are not altogether as disinterested as they would have the Christians in Turkey, and Europe generally, to believe. The result has been that the Christians in Turkey—I mean those belonging to the Eastern Greek Church—have been led to regard the Turks with a deeper and more unanimous hatred than ever. Their hopes are now balanced between the prospect, on the one hand, of being united to a State too feeble to protect itself, and, on the other, of being subjected to uncontrolled Christian tyranny. Although many of them believe that the latter alternative will be their eventual fate, they would prefer a dominating Power of their own creed to a Mahometan one. My humble opinion is that, had it not been for such foreign agency as I have described, the Christians would have been far happier than they are now, as it has been employed in a manner which, instead of allowing to the Porte time and opportunity for spontaneous action, has rather indisposed the Porte towards this class of the Sultan's subjects.

There is one striking feature in the management of affairs in Turkey which cannot be too strongly dwelt upon, that is, that the provinces are neglected for the capital. At the capital all the resources of the State are collected, and there they are lavishly expended. One-half of what is annually thrown away would, within the last twenty years, have sufficed to make good roads through all the principal provinces. It would prove an incalculable benefit to the provinces were a certain portion of the public revenues to be appropriated for their self-improvement, and the people who contribute them to have an elective voice in the investment.

The Turkish Government has also too long neglected the interests of the two classes of the population upon whose well-being the prosperity of the country mainly depends, namely, the agricultural and mercantile classes. Almost every other consideration ought to have been sacrificed for the promotion of their interests. Like the Turkish landed proprietors, the State appears to care not how its revenues are raised, provided it receives them. By means of a little attention to this point, the revenues derived from the tithes and the Customs would be sensibly increased without imposing additional burdens upon the people. The taxes in Turkey are not heavy; but it is the mode of collection which causes them to be felt oppressive. Long experience of the rapacity of the Government has taught the population that their wisest policy is not to pay their contributions too readily. Prompt payment would be taken as an indication that they had the means to give more, and the demand for more would follow.

We have an instance of this in the manner in which the direct taxes were assessed upon the Christians on the promulgation of the "Tanzimati Haïriyé," which was intended to put a stop to the then existing system of exactions. The Rayah population, on being called upon, promptly furnished statements of the exact amount of the contributions they had been arbitrarily subjected to in addition to the lawful taxes; and since it was presumed that they had been able to satisfy all the requisitions made upon them, the Government, I am told, forthwith assessed them with the whole amount, which they pay at the present moment.

The class of men selected for the posts of Mudirs in the provincial districts is generally a very inferior one. Their salaries being exceedingly small, there is every inducement to increase them unlawfully. If the Porte knew how greatly the welfare of its subjects depended upon the conduct of the Mudirs it would at once reform the whole system of these appointments.

Reviewing my answers to your Excellency's question, and what I have written above, I beg leave respectfully to state it as my humble opinion that direct foreign interference in the affairs of the various races, at least in the way in which it has been exercised hitherto, is most prejudicial to the general interests of the population. It ought at once to be put a stop to by every practicable means. More good would be done by employing the gentle influence of unobtrusive and disinterested advice at the head than by exciting the susceptibilities of both rulers and subjects in the mode that has been practised.

It is difficult to conceive a more offensive course for one independent State

to pursue towards another independent State in time of peace, than that the one should receive and take formal notice of complaints preferred against the other by a portion of its own subjects. The initiative in a course of this kind has recently been taken by Russia towards Turkey; and although the highly-coloured statements of the former Power will very probably be successfully refuted, the bare fact of Russia having openly provoked an inquiry into the condition of the Christians in Turkey will establish a permanent claim on her part to their gratitude that cannot but sensibly affect the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

The deplorable events that have occurred in Syria, and the display of Mahometan fanaticism, accompanied, as it always is, with atrocities, ought to make us more than ever cautious how we curb the spirit of the conquering race in Turkey. The Turks, too, have their secret societies; and the discovery of one conspiracy, with the punishment of the leaders, is no security against the formation of other conspiracies against the Government, and against the Christians, who are considered to have been too much favoured by the Government already.

The lives of the Europeans who are thinly scattered over the country are assuredly not safe so long as the elements of strife are fermenting on both sides. The lives of the foreign Agents, too, are exposed to even greater danger, because the Government itself seems to be incapable of suppressing an outbreak against Christians; whilst, were the case reversed, a foreign Agent suspected of having upheld the authority of the Porte would in all probability be sacrificed to the popular vengeance of the Christians.

Rumours occasionally get into circulation, here and there, of an apprehended rising of the Mussulmans, and the Turkish authorities are always the first to lull suspicion by asserting that there is no cause for alarm, and so for the time being no notice is taken of such rumours. Nevertheless the possibility of such a disaster should be carefully weighed, the temper of the Turks taken into calculation, and the opportunity watched before it were safe to concede to the representations of an unscrupulous Power which, under the mask of humanity, only desires to forward its own views, regardless of every consequence not affecting its interests in particular.

I should therefore say that, however much we may see to condemn in the Turks, no measures of reform ought to be introduced without carefully sounding the public mind in advance, in order to reconcile, as far as may be practicable, the numerous conflicting interests of the population, and thus avert the calamity which too great eagerness to remodel the system of government would be certain to entail upon the world.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES J. CALVERT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 2.

Answers to Queries.

1. THE condition of the province of Salonica, inclusive of Tricala (Thessaly), is not generally satisfactory. The causes are manifold. They may be briefly summed up as follows:—

Insecurity to life and property in the rural districts;

The vexatious exactions of the farmers of the public revenue;

The non-development of the natural resources of the industrial arts and agriculture, and consequent languor of the export trade which, with the exception of a few articles, has made but little progress;

The practice of either devoting capital to loans at high rates of interest instead of investing it in the improvement of the resources of the country, or else hoarding it;

The discouragement which peasants feel to cultivate more land than is absolutely requisite to enable them to provide their own necessities out of their share of their crop; of this whatever remains over is hoarded and concealed;

The want of properly constituted tribunals, and the imperfect execution of the Sultan's Ordinances;

The absence of facilities for transport of travellers and merchandize;

The pervading feeling of uneasiness and anxiety as to the future.

To which may be added the mistrust and jealousy with which the dominated and dominating races regard each other, together with a common want of confidence in, and affection for, the Sultan's Government; the one class considering that too much has been conceded to the Christians; and the other that not enough has been done for them.

2. The adult male population of the province of Salonica may be approximately stated as follows: namely,—

The twelve Cazas of Salonica:		
Mussulmans	26,000	
Christians	100,000	
Jews and other sects	5,000	
		131,000
The Sandjak of Serres:		
Mussulmans	6,000	
Christians	20,000	
Jews and other sects	3,000	
		29,000
The Sandjak of Drama:		
Mussulmans	70,000	
Christians	10,000	
Jews and other sects	5,000	
		85,000
The Sandjak of Triccala:		
Mussulmans	20,000	
Christians	120,000	
Jews and other sects	1,000	
		141,000
Forming a total of		386,000
Total number of Mussulmans		122,000
" " Christians..		250,000
" " other sects		14,000

In the above estimate females and children of both sexes under 14 not being included, one-third only of the total population is given.

3. The majority of the agricultural population is composed of Christians. There are also a large proportion of Mussulmans who till the soil. The carriers, shepherds, day labourers, masons, carpenters, &c., are principally Christians. The great bulk of proprietors in the country are Mussulmans. There are very few Mussulmans engaged in trade in the towns; those who are, belong to the peculiar sect called Ma'mins, reformed Jews outwardly professing Islamism. The trade of the country is almost exclusively in the hands of Christians and Jews.

4. They can; only as regards the acquisition of landed property a Christian is not allowed to purchase any belonging to a Turk. Exceptions are, however, made.

5. There are so few Turks engaged in trade in the towns that a standard of comparison can scarcely be said to exist. There is no difference in this respect that I am aware of.

6. As the Mussulman peasantry are not as well off as they might be, the distinction between the condition of the Christians and that of the Mussulmans in the villages is in some respects only relative. One point of difference consists in the fact that the irregularities of the tax and tithes collectors, and the excesses of the police force, not to speak of the depredations of brigands, are practised to a larger extent and with more barefacedness on the Christian than on the Mussulman peasantry. It is, however, extremely difficult to define the extent of the difference, and quite impossible to prove the facts on which the general statement of its existence is founded. But I feel persuaded that, without admitting any special claim of the Christians on our sympathy, the tacit submission of the Christians to the abuses in question, and to others of a harassing character, has conduced to their perpetuation at the hands of the notoriously rapacious tax and tithes-farmers. The Mussulman peasantry are not so extensively imposed upon, because the superior chance which their complaints have

of being listened to by a District Government in which the element of their co-religionists preponderates, causes them to be regarded with greater respect. The Mussulman peasantry, nevertheless, suffer from the same causes as their fellow-labourers on the soil only to a smaller degree. There is, however, a positive difference, and a very important one, in the condition of the Christian peasants in the farms ("tchiftliks") held by Turkish proprietors. They are forcibly tied to the spot by means of a perpetual and even hereditary debt which their landlord contrives to fasten upon them. This has practically reduced many of the peasant families to a state of serfdom. As an illustration I may mention that when a tchiftlik is sold, the bonds of the peasantry are transferred with the stock to the new proprietor. In Thessaly there are Christians who own farms on the same conditions. Upon one occasion in which the landlord, who was a merchant, had become a bankrupt, I remember noticing that amongst the assets borne on his balance-sheet there figured the aggregate amount of the peasants' debts to him, and it formed a rather large item.

7. In Salonica it is. If it has ever been refused in the District Courts of Justice, I am not prepared to point out the cases where it has been refused.

8. I have to hesitate in answering in the affirmative on all three points. I should state, however, that the change for the better within the last five years is scarcely perceptible, and will only be properly appreciated hereafter when its advantages stand out prominently as from the background of the past. The Christians themselves admit that their general condition is improved, but they think that more ought to have been accomplished by this time. The progress of the work of reconstruction does not keep pace with their fond hopes of something better than they seem ever to expect from their present rulers.

The use of the degrading terms offensively employed by the Mussulmans in speaking and writing of Christians and Jews is gradually dying out. Only, the Turks would do wisely to abolish the distinctive epithets in their public letters which they have preserved to this day. They themselves know full well the force of those words which have nothing offensive in their meaning until they are applied relatively to the persons designated. Thus, the gradations in the class of words, answering to our "the said," "the aforestated," "the above-mentioned," which are of frequent occurrence in Turkish composition, may be employed in such a way as to reduce a Christian to an inferiority of consideration if he be alluded to in the same document with a Turk. While to a Turk the term "mûma-ilêi" (extolled), or "mezkûr" (mentioned) would be applied, in writing of a Christian it would be "merkûm" (traced out), "mezbûr" (alluded to), or "mestûr" (written).

The same shade of difference is carried out in all their writings. For instance, "Hajji" (pilgrim) is used for a Mussulman who visits his shrine, and "Aji" (bitter) for a Christian who performs the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

9. The inequalities dependent on religion are:—

1st. That Christians and Jews are not allowed to hold the public offices usually assigned to Turks. Thus, the President of the Tribunals are invariably Turks;

2ndly. That a given number of Christians or Jews is represented in the Medjlises by a smaller proportion of members than an equal number of Mussulmans;

3rdly. That the evidence of a Mussulman has more weight in the Turkish Courts, where a Turk is in the case, than that of a Christian or Jew;

4thly. That the derogatory distinctions adverted to in the answer to the preceding question (No. 8), with others of a similar character, are confirmed by the Turkish officials.

10. They would not like to enter the military service if, through their enrolement in the Sultan's army, they would be compelled to leave that part of the country where their home is fixed. But if they were called upon to furnish their contingent to a well-organized police force, serving in their own district, or not far from it, they would, in all probability, prefer furnishing that contingent to paying the exemptive tax. That is to say, provided the police detachment to which they belonged was composed and officered exclusively by Christians, and that both men and officers were well and regularly paid and fed. Under such conditions they would gain more than by paying the tax.

In respect of the subject of this question, the Christians are strongly

contrasted with the Jews, who have so little taste for the profession of arms that they would rather pay the tax ten times over than be obliged to serve in the army.

11. None, that I am aware of. I have never heard either mentioned as a grievance in this part of the country.

12. They are attributable chiefly to the innate hatred which the Mussulmans bear towards the Christians; and, if the officials of the Porte ever act against the Christians, they (particularly the subordinate authorities in the districts) are generally instigated by some influential Mussulman landed proprietor sitting in the Medjlis. Otherwise, the Mussulman and Christian population live peaceably towards each other, not from motives of affection or sympathy, but, because of their mutual dislike, they avoid each other as much as possible. The Mussulman always considers himself the Christian's superior, and whenever he acts with kindness towards the Christian it is with a species of condescension and forbearance which converts a right into a favour.

13. There are very few Protestant subjects of the Porte in this neighbourhood. Part reside in the town of Salonica, and part in the district of Cassandra. Some are Jews and some are Greeks. All the annoyance they have been subjected to has proceeded from the sect from which they have seceded. The Jewish Rabbis pronounce the "kheyram," and the Greek Bishops the anathema, against the seceders, the effect of which is to reduce the objects of the ban to the greatest distress. They are avoided by their relatives and former friends; no one will either buy or sell with them, or give them employment; so that, from actual want of the means of subsistence, they are obliged to recant. In Russia the Government has made it a penal offence for a Jewish Rabbi to pronounce a ban, but I do not know whether their own Clergy are privileged or not to anathematise the disobedient members of their flocks. It would be a great boon were the Porte to prohibit the practice of anathemas and excommunications, for the reason that it interferes with the principle of toleration in matters of faith which has been established through the benevolence of the Sultan. The Turks may well be excused their fanaticism, when so much bigotry, intolerance, and uncharitableness prevail amongst the Christian sects. The Greek Clergy, I regret to have to add, are, for the most part, the greatest opponents to the circulation of the Scriptures amongst their flock, although the latter have generally evinced readiness to receive them.

14. The Christian authorities—by which I mean their Spiritual Chiefs and their Primates ("Cojabashis")—are even more rapacious and tyrannical in their small sphere than the Turkish authorities are in a larger sphere. The Bishops and Metropolitans are guilty of many acts of oppression and cupidity towards their flocks, which, if committed by Turks, would rouse a storm of indignation on the part of the Christians' sympathisers. Only a few days ago, the Bishop of Vodenà, being in want of money, sent to a small hamlet of only forty families in his diocese and extorted 1,000 piastres. The assessed taxes are collected by the Cojabashis, who resort to the harshest measures in order to exact more than is justly due, so as to enable them to appropriate the surplus.

In the village accounts, which are kept by the Cojabashis, the expenditure for extras is frequently exorbitant; and a large amount is generally charged for "presents" (*i. e.*, bribes), the greater part of which has not, probably, ever been disbursed.

I have heard that it is in contemplation to introduce a measure according to which the Greek Clergy will be prevented from collecting their own revenues. It would be well were some means to be devised that would enable the population to pay the taxes direct into the Treasury.

15. Christians are admitted into the local Councils, but they are so few in number compared with the Mussulman members as to be completely overawed, and therefore practically useless. They blindly affix their seals to the "mazbattas" (reports or decisions) which are written in Turkish,—a language they can rarely read; and even were they to understand what was written, they would scarcely venture to refuse to confirm it, although they might inwardly dissent from the purport of the document.

The Medjlises, as at present constituted, are decidedly opposed to progress and good government, because the former would destroy their influence without, and the latter would weaken their power within; in either case depriving the

members of the means of forwarding their own individual interests, which I believe to be paramount to all others. When a new Governor is appointed, there is generally a struggle for the upperhand. If the Pasha be weak, any good intentions he may be desirous to carry out are frustrated, and the Medjlis has its own way in everything; and, if he be firm, the Medjlis conspire against him, and they usually have friends at Constantinople through whose influence they eventually succeed in getting him removed. In no case can any responsibility be fastened upon the members as a body. The onus of every fault, even if caused by their opposition to the Governor, falls upon the Governor himself.

The Medjlises cannot but be unfavourable to progress and good government when the members wilfully, though covertly, transgress the known wishes of the Central Government by settling amongst themselves beforehand the manner in which a case about to be brought under their notice in the Council shall be disposed of.

Instead of being judges, they more frequently act the part of advocates, and it requires the utmost vigilance of an honest Governor to counteract their machinations. The Christian members commonly side with the strongest party, to whom they, in a manner, sell their consciences. The business transacted at the Medjlises is, therefore, a mere play, the parts of which have been pre-arranged. The Governor, who has numerous other calls upon his time and attention, cannot, in every case, check such irregularities. The present Governor of Salonica has, however, prevailed over the Medjlis; and it is due to his zeal, firmness, and integrity, and especially to the support he receives from higher quarters, that he has been able to do so much good to this country.

16. As the necessity of limiting the attributes of the Medjlises has been sufficiently demonstrated by the foregoing answer (No. 15), and the next question affords the occasion for suggesting the mode by which that might be effected, I refer to the following answer (No. 17).

I may merely premise, in this place, that the Chief Council and the tribunals of the province are composed in the following manner:—

The "Medjlissi Kebir," or Grand Council:—Twelve Turks, namely, the Governor of the Province; the Muhasebiji, or Chief Accountant; the Mufti, or Turkish High-Priest; the Mollah, or Cadi; the Evkaf Naziri, or Superintendent of the Vakoof property (an office now held by Mustapha Bey); Mehmed Bey, Haïrullah Bey, and Abdurahman Bey (brothers); Hadji Ahmed Agha and Salih Bey (brothers of the Evkaf of Naziri); Abdullah Bey (a relation of the preceding brothers); Ibrahim Bey:

Two Christians; namely, the Metropolitan of Salonica, and Dimitri Economo:

One Jew, Jacob Benvenisti.

The "Tahkik Medjlis," or Court of Inquiry into Criminal Cases, likewise called "Istintâk Medjlis:"—

A Turkish President and eight members; namely, four Turks, two Christians, and two Jews; also two Turkish clerks.

The "Tijaret Medjlis," or Commercial Court:—

A Turkish President and eight members; namely, four Turks (of whom three are Mamîns), two Christians, and two Jews; also a Turkish clerk (a Mamîn).

The "Mehkémé," or purely Turkish Court of Justice, where the suits are disposed of by the Cadi in accordance with the religious laws drawn from the Koran. The Mehkémé is also the office where notarial acts are done.

There is likewise a "Zeraât Mudîri" (Abdurahman Bey, one of the members of the Grand Council), for the settlement of differences arising out of farm accounts. He calls in assessors *ad hoc*, either with or without the consent of the parties.

17. I should be in favour of withdrawing every particle of judicial functions from the Medjlises, and of erecting them into purely deliberative Councils, and I think that Tribunals apart from such Councils ought to be created.

Each community, Mahometan, Christian, and Jewish, ought to elect their own representatives for fixed periods, say for three years at a time, and the number of the members might be proportioned to the population.

In the rural districts smaller Councils might be formed in the same manner

under the presidency of the Sub-Governors. Only questions affecting the general interests of the population ought to be admitted to debate. In the district towns there might be six, and in the central town of the province twelve members, and to each Council where there is a mixed population, a Turkish and a Christian secretary might be appointed by the Porte, whose duty it would be to record the proceedings each in his own language, and to serve in some measure as channels of communication between the people and the Councils. The spiritual heads of the different communities, namely, the Mufti or his Naib, for the Mussulmans, the Metropolitan, Archbishops, and Bishops for the Christian sects, and the Rabbis for the Jews, to have the right *ex officio* of sitting in the Council and to have a deliberative voice. When the Council either unanimously or by a majority of voices has agreed to a proposed measure, the result of its deliberations should be submitted by the Governor of the Province to the approval of the Porte, who would have either to decree the adoption of the measure before it could have any legal force, or to pass its veto upon it.

As the revision of the measures proposed by the Provincial Councils would entail a considerable amount of labour on the Central Government, I would be for erecting an office at the capital, the duties of which would consist in transmitting either way between the provinces and the heads of the Departments at the Porte, the reports and the decrees. By such means greater regularity, and possibly greater punctuality and expedition would be secured.

The acts of the Local Councils ought to be registered *seriatim* in a book to be kept for the purpose by each Secretary, and that register ought at all times to be accessible to the members. When the acts have been sanctioned by the Porte they should, where the means exists, be printed and published.

The reports from the District Councils would, in the first instance, be sent up to the Central Provincial Council, which would have to pass its opinion on them before their transmission to the capital.

All matters relating to the mode of levying the taxes, or their assessment, the maintenance of public order and security, the improvement of the condition of the rural and urban population, the promotion of trade and industry, and such like, would come under the cognizance of the Councils.

In order that each notable member of the community might have the opportunity of serving the public, I would propose that one representative should retire periodically to make room for another. The meetings might take place once or twice a-week, and the members, irrespective of creed, should have some distinction prefix such as "Honourable" put to their names, and receive a suitable salary during their tenure of office. If any particular member, owing to superior qualifications for the office or to other creditable motives, should happen to be re-elected, the Government would have the opportunity afforded it of testifying its recognition of his merit by the bestowal of a badge and title of distinction on him, without reference to his creed.

This might possibly act as an incentive to zeal and integrity, both of which qualities are, unfortunately, scarcely known at present. It might likewise induce a feeling of greater loyalty on the part of the Christian members.

Then apart from the Medjlis thus constituted, with its attributes clearly defined, there would remain the tribunals of law and justice to erect, namely, a a Civil Court, a Criminal Court, a Commercial Court, and a Police Court.

Under the present system, the important functions of all these Courts, excepting the Commercial, are centred in the Medjlis; and it is clearly improper that the attention of this body should be occupied, as it frequently is, with a simple police case which might be disposed of summarily by a subordinate Magistrate.

It is the practice of the Turkish Tribunals to sit with closed doors, and none but the parties in the case and their witnesses are admitted. I would therefore suggest, as a powerful check upon arbitrary proceedings, that all the above mentioned Courts should be held in public, that is, with open doors on fixed days, and at stated hours. There are various modes by which they might be constituted, regard being had to the absence in Turkey of a class of persons educated to the legal profession, or perfectly competent to act as Judges.

With the help of a simple Code of Laws, and some plain rules of procedure to be applied without distinction of class or creed, a great advance could be made towards a more equal administration of justice. In the course of time, and as experience would dictate, those laws and rules could be modified so as to keep

pace with the progress made. In Turkey it is easier to frame laws than to find persons who will apply them properly. Tribunals exist, but a fit class of Magistrates and Judges to sit in them is wanting. To supply this deficiency, we must fall back upon the same class of people as those who compose the Local Councils above mentioned—the notables who enjoy the confidence and respect of the public, or who may be distinguished by the superiority of their judgment and acquaintance with the people. The readiest way of proceeding, therefore, would seem to be to compile a list of all eligible individuals of the community, and out of the number to select the members of the Courts of Law and Justice.

The Civil Court might be composed as follows:—

A President, with no local connections, to be appointed by the Porte; four to six Assessors; two Registrars, a Turk and a Christian, with one or more clerks under them. The President would conduct the proceedings; and it would be an advantage were he to be made the sole medium of communication between the Court and the parties to the suit. The Registrar's duty would be to take Minutes of the proceedings. The President would pronounce the decision, to which the Assessors will have either to assent or dissent; in the latter case, recording their motives at the foot of the written decision. The same plan might be carried out with respect to the District Courts.

As a check upon arbitrary decisions or irregular proceedings, every facility should be afforded to parties desirous of appealing to a higher tribunal. That object would, I conceive, be best attained by the appointment of a special Officer or Recorder unconnected with the Local Government, whose duty it would be to enter, in a Register prepared for the purpose, a Minute of every plaint on which a suit may be founded. All plaints to be laid before the Governor, who should be instructed to admit none but such as had been duly registered and numbered by the Recorder. The Governor, or his Secretary, Turkish or Greek, either in Council or not, would then decree the reference of the plaint to the proper tribunal, Civil, Criminal, or Commercial, according to the nature of the case. When a decision is given by either the Civil or the Commercial Court, the party who may be desirous of appealing against it would lodge his appeal with the Recorder, who would be bound to give notice thereof to the Local Court and to the next highest tribunal. Thus from the District Courts the appeal would be to the Provincial Courts, and from the Provincial Courts to the Supreme Council of Justice, or to the "Tijaret" at Constantinople, as the case may be. But lest the remoteness from some of the provinces of the Courts of Appeal might be deemed an inconvenience, a Provincial Court of Appeal might be erected. The Judges in this Court could be delegated, say one member from each of the communities represented from the Council of the province. The final appeal would then be to the highest Courts at Constantinople. This arrangement would necessarily be subject to some regulations as to time, provisional execution of judgment, security for costs and expenses, value in suit, &c.

In providing for Civil Courts I have purposely omitted to take into accou the "Mehkemé," because as the attributes of the Cadi or Mussulman Jud have undergone sensible modifications since the last reforms (Edict of Gulhané), the effect of any newly-contemplated measures tending to equalize, permanently, the balance of justice, as between Mussulman and Christian, would be to render that Magistrate almost a superfluity, since all his decisions in civil suits must be founded upon the "Sheryi," or Koran Code of Laws, which, we all know, are not conspicuous for their tolerance towards unbelievers. The Cadi, however, would be useful as a public notary, to execute deeds and perform sundry legal acts, such as administering oaths to Mahometan witnesses, giving attestations, and taking down depositions. Or he might be made the Recorder of plaints and appeals, and be empowered to levy a small fee for the services rendered.

There are few men of this class of officials who are proof against the temptations to venality with which their office is now beset. The Cadis hold their office only for a year, at the expiration of which period they are either reappointed or replaced by a successor. Their emoluments are derived from fees, for which no scale is fixed, but are rather regulated by bargain. When the period draws nigh at which a Cadi knows he must retire, his sole anxiety is to collect as many fees as he can. He then cheapens his bargains; and so vicious

is the system pursued, on these occasions, that it frequently happens the most arbitrary judgments ("ilâms") affecting important interests of landed property, are issued by him during the last few days before his retirement. Only the other day, at Serres, Husni Pasha, the present Governor of Salonica, destroyed a number of ilâms issued by the ex-Cadi of that town under the circumstances mentioned. But it is not every Turkish Governor who will act in such an independent or impartial spirit; and thus, in the very largest majority of cases, the Cadi's last ilâms are carried into effect, and a vast amount of irreparable injury falls upon the luckless individual who had failed to out-fee his unscrupulous adversary. The Cadi, therefore, ought to be excluded from every Court of law and justice, although it might be deemed expedient to admit him to the Councils.

I have now to notice the Criminal Court. As at present constituted this is merely a Court of Inquiry or Investigation, called the "Tahkik Medjlis," composed of Mussulman and non-Mussulman members. During the few years it has been in operation it appears to work satisfactorily. I have been present on one or two occasions and thought that the proceedings were conducted with great propriety and regularity, although it struck me that this depended, in a great measure, perhaps too much so to be taken as the rule, upon the conduct of the President. This Court takes down, in writing, all the depositions and examinations, and when the inquiry is concluded, a report ("mazbatta") is addressed to the Governor, who passes sentence provisionally, except in those cases where the criminal is convicted of a capital offence, and awaits the sanction of the Porte before carrying it into execution.

I would leave the Criminal Court untouched so long as it continues to act, as I have seen it do when the present Governor of Salonica presided. I would, however, recommend the appointment of a President having no local connections and no local interests to subserve. I would also recommend, for the sake of humanity, that every practicable expedition, compatible with the true ends of retributive justice, be used in getting through the inquiries; for where there is a large number of criminals to be tried the dilatoriness of the Court keeps them languishing for months in confinement, during which, in the present state of the prisons, they are exposed to infectious and fatal disorders.

The Commercial Court is badly constituted and gives no satisfaction. When a foreigner is concerned in a cause the attendance of the Consul's deputy, and the addition, *ad hoc*, of a couple of foreign assessors, are more likely to ensure greater regularity in the proceedings.

But even under favourable circumstances I know instances in which decisions at variance with commercial law and usages have been given, and one, in particular, in which an action was brought to recover losses and expenses consequent on a forcible seizure of the property of the plaintiff, when the Court, after months of delay, issued a decision confirming the plaintiff's right, but declining to point out which of the two parties implicated on the other side was responsible for the act. The plaintiff was an Ionian and the defendants Turks; one of them the ex-Kaimakam of Serres. Through this culpable omission on the part of the Court, it is strongly suspected that the Ottoman members were bribed. The Kaimakam was allowed to leave the country, and the case has not yet been settled, although the proceedings commenced nearly two years ago.

In a place like Salonica, where there are so few elements for composing a Commercial Court according to the rules laid down in 1849, and where there are no Turks, saving the hybrid Mamins, engaged in trade, questions of a purely commercial nature might be disposed of more satisfactorily and expeditiously by arbitration, with an umpire in case of disagreement. If the arbiters found that the case was not purely a commercial one, they could send it back to the Governor, who would then refer the parties to the Civil Court.

In the Police Court, a Turkish and a Christian Magistrate, appointed by the Governor, might sit side by side five days in the week, and dispose of all ordinary police cases summarily. They might likewise receive criminal charges, and transmit them to the Governor to be sent on by him to the Criminal Court. A daily report of the cases standing in the books of the Police Court, and of those disposed of, signed by both Magistrates, should be submitted to the Governor. In localities where the population includes others sects, such as Jews, a Jewish Magistrate might take his place on special occasions with the Turkish and Christian Magistrates.

A few plain instructions for the guidance of the Magistrates would require to be framed. The Magistrates should have no executive functions to perform.

The executive power should be vested exclusively in the Governor of the Province, and in the sub-Governors acting under his authority.

This is a fit place to offer a few remarks on the subject of witnesses. I premise that the evidence of any individual arrived at the age of discrimination and in the possession of his faculties is admissible in all the tribunals without distinction of rank, nationality, or creed.

The names and residences of the witnesses which the plaintiff in a civil suit desires to call in support of his plaint, should be written in some part of the petition; so that when it reaches the Civil Court before which the case is to be tried, the President or the Secretaries should first summon the defendant and inquire of him whether he intends to contest the action or not: in the former case binding him over to appear on the day that may be appointed for the hearing and to name the witnesses in his defence; and, in the latter, taking security from him that he will satisfy the plaintiff. The plaintiff, on his side, should give security for the payment of the expenses of his witnesses and those of the defendant, according as the issue of the suit may determine. The witnesses should then be served with notices to appear, and, if requisite, they should be bound to do so on the day fixed. A scale of expenses might be framed, fixing the amount per diem, according to the station of the witness, that shall be paid to him during his absence from his home or habitual place of residence, together with his travelling expenses. All witnesses should be sworn by their respective authorities before going to the Court, and they should hand in a certificate to that effect before giving their evidence. Such a course would dispense with the inconvenience of the attendance of the persons by whom oaths are administered to the members of the various sects.

In criminal cases where there is a prosecutor, the same course might be followed by the President of the Court of Inquiry, and provision ought to be made that, when the accused is convicted of his offence, the expenses should not fall upon the prosecutor, but rather be defrayed by the culprit, or by the Government. Yet, some precaution would be necessary to check any disposition to leniency towards the accused on account of his rank, or of his religious belief, which might be induced, when the Court had it in its power, to make the prosecutor pay the expenses.

Instead of the "Ressim," or Governor's fee, on all money recovered through his executive medium from debtors (amounting to 5 per cent. when the creditor is a Turkish subject, and to 2 per cent. when he is a foreigner), which the creditor has now to pay, I would substitute a regular scale of fees, to be paid in the manner the Court may direct.

Penalties ought to be attached to disobedience of summonses.

According to the plan I have attempted to sketch out, every class of the population would be represented and would have the means afforded it of making known its wants and grievances with greater certainty of obtaining justice, or at least of obtaining an impartial hearing, than at present exists. For instance, supposing a village community, or an individual peasant, has reason to complain of the exactions of the tithes-farmer, or of the arbitrary proceedings of the police, a Turkish or a Christian member of the district, or of the Provincial Council, on being informed of the act complained of, would frame a plain statement of the case, and, after laying it before the Council, move that Body to institute an inquiry into it with the view to the punishment of the culpable parties. For this purpose it would be useful were a Mixed Committee of members to be detached from the Council to conduct the inquiry on the spot, and to bring up their Report to the full Council, who would then have to pass their opinion on it, and direct the measures to be taken in consequence.

A few such inquiries, followed up by the condign punishment of the culpable, would have the most salutary effect, and, in all probability, induce a feeling of confidence which is now wanting amongst all classes, but especially amongst the Christians, in their rulers. Numerous other abuses, which are daily practised, might very possibly be eradicated by similar means. The population at large, now suffering from the unchecked prevalence of irregularities, or from a merely partial correction of them, would then be taught to look up to the Councils as their best friends and protectors.

18. I cannot say that, as a body, they do The cases of Christian females

who have been abducted by, or who have voluntarily eloped with, Mussulmans in this part of the country, are very scarce in proportion to the population.

The cases of conversion of males are even rarer. I am acquainted with only two cases of the latter description in which Christian youths offered themselves before the Medjlis as candidates for the "white faith," as they called it. In both instances they were dismissed by the Governor (Husni Pasha), whom a few inquiries satisfied that their motives were impure. It is not every bad Christian that will make a good Mussulman.

I am also acquainted with three or four cases of female conversion to Islamism. In one of them, there can be no doubt, compulsion was used. That was during the Governorship of Mirza Said Pasha. Sufficient influence was exerted to have the girl eventually brought from Drama, where she had been detained for some weeks, to Salonica to be examined. She managed to flee, with her parents, to Constantinople; and, further influence having been employed there, her abducters, two young Turks of Drama, named Omer Havali and Mustafa Havali, were finally put upon their trial at Salonica. The conduct of one of the Beys of Drama, named Hajji Tahir Omer Bey, was to have been investigated at the same time.

The girl's father returned from Constantinople to prosecute the offenders, and everything appeared to be progressing favourably in the cause of retributive justice, when the proceedings received a sudden and decisive check from an unexpected quarter. The French Consul informed the Governor, in the presence of the Medjlis, that, having recently met the Metropolitan of Drama, he had been assured by that Prelate that the girl Magdalini had voluntarily declared to him her intention to become a Mussulman. This admission was made six months after the girl's alleged profession of Islamism. There is, however, very strong reason for suspecting that the Metropolitan of Drama perjured his conscience for the sake of the goodwill of the Beys of that district, of which he happened just then to stand in great need; as I regret to add that, had he not done so, he would not have been able to raise from his flock (mostly dependents of the Beys themselves) the means to satisfy some pressing creditors for a large sum of money.

The father, for the security of his life, has emigrated to another part of the country; and his daughter, who has remained a Christian, is, I believe, living at Constantinople.

In the other cases, two girls were restored to their Christian parents, and another chose to remain a Mussulman, despite every persuasion to the contrary, and every opportunity for reflection.

19. Religious enthusiasm, I may safely venture to assert, is never the motive on the side of the females; and I doubt very much whether, in the cases with which I am acquainted, it existed on the other side—the more especially, because Mussulmans are not only allowed to have Christian wives, but they are obliged to give them every facility for worshipping according to their own faith; and because true Mussulmans consider it an unhallowed motive for a Christian female to change her faith out of mere love for the person of a Mussulman. In every case, therefore, in which a Mussulman acts contrarily to the above principles, as in the case of Magdalini (Answer No. 18), he renders himself liable to punishment. It depends upon the officials of the Porte to arraign and condemn the culpable, but they do not always do their duty in this respect.

The causes are almost invariably worldly, and proceed from depravity of morals. A girl may have quarrelled with her relatives; or her desires may become inflamed by a young Turk quite as readily as they would be by a young Christian, and so, forgetful of her duty, she may throw herself into his possession, and, having once sinned, be easily persuaded to fly with him. Her only chance of retrieving her position, according to the common error, is then to become a Mahometan, and to be married to her lover. But the law is, that, where the remotest suspicion exists of a carnal connection, the female is watched until such time as she may be proved to be pregnant or not. In the former case, the father of the yet unborn child is bound to make a pecuniary provision to the mother for her offspring; and in the case of criminal connection without fruit, he must compensate her for the injury done to her person. In neither event can the woman (that is, a Christian) insist upon his taking her to wife. Notwithstanding the connection that may have taken place, she cannot be compelled to become a Mussulman.

In one instance, I happened to be present in the Medjlis when a Christian girl, who had eloped from her home in one of the villages under circumstances similar to those mentioned above, was being examined. She admitted her love for her abductor, and confessed that, being poor, she could never expect to be married to any Christian who would give her such fine clothing and ornaments as her lover was likely to do. She related, with the utmost *sangfroid*, the tragedy that followed her flight. Her father, in his pursuit, had scarcely come up with the pair, when her lover turned upon him and split his head open with a hatchet. The murderer took to flight; and her only anxiety was as to when he would return to her. She persisted in calling herself a Mahometan.

Few as the cases of the conversion of females are, it is most necessary they should be forthwith examined into; for, if allowed to pass unnoticed, the practice might become scandalously frequent.

20. Those which I have attempted to describe in Answer No. 17. As to the simpleness of the forms, I think that, where a new edifice has to be erected, the builder, if he has the slightest knowledge of his art, and knows exactly what is required, will study to avoid the superfluities and weak points he may have discerned in other works, and, turning his materials to the best account, will construct his own accordingly. And as to the expense, it would be a matter for the consideration of the political economist whether the Government would gain most by saving the salaries to be paid out of its Treasury to the increased staff of officials, or by the additional prosperity of the country expected from the application of the measures, which would require the larger disbursement to be made; in other words, present sacrifices would have to be weighed against prospective benefits.

In any case it is essential that the laws should be punctually and impartially carried into effect. The Governor of the province and the Sub-Governors ought therefore to be made directly responsible for the execution of the judgments of the Civil Courts; and wherever they are proved to have failed in their duty, they should be punished with severity. The penalties ought to be fixed by law, so that each functionary may know, on accepting an office, what he has to expect.

Bribery ought to be made a penal offence, and the laws for its repression ought to be enforced most ruthlessly. I would not punish the giver of a bribe if on his information any public officer were convicted of the crime. The penalties should be regulated proportionately to the trust committed to the offender: the higher the grade the more rigorous the punishment.

21. They have been already in part indicated by the previous answers. There is one measure, however, which has frequently occurred to me. All the revenues raised in the Empire are appropriated exclusively by the State, whilst the people who supply them know not what becomes of them further than that they go generally to pay the officials, the land and sea forces, and that a part is absorbed in some way or other which reflects no benefit upon themselves. Let the revenues from all sources, therefore, be collected by Government officers, necessarily trustworthy, and be publicly accounted for. The same with the expenditure. A larger sum would flow into the Treasury, because in the case of the farmed revenues, the Government would gain what the speculators and their bankers now do, and by the exercise of economy and proper control over the public expenditure, a surplus would be left that might be devoted with advantage to public works in the provinces. Thus, were roads and bridges made, trade and agriculture would receive the impulse it now wants; hospitals and asylums might be built, and good prisons constructed. Through a more equal and strict administration of justice confidence would ensue, and from it would spring the association of capital for private enterprises, improving the industrial arts, which are at present at a very low ebb. The internal Customs duty upon a variety of native manufactured articles ought to be abolished, and remitted upon some exported articles of native manufacture.

A useful institution would be the establishment of provincial banks for savings, loans, and deposits. A considerable amount of ready money which is now believed to be lying inactive, hoarded up by most Mussulmans as well as by Christians, would then be tempted into circulation; and where money flows freely it is a sign of confidence in the stability of the State, and a sure indication of prosperity.

I am obliged to confess that the people do not appear to have, at present,

any confidence in the Government. The chief aim of the Government, therefore, should be to restore that confidence. If their good faith has been doubted, they should seize every opportunity to retrieve their lost character; and without some palpable, earnest, and continued proofs of their good intentions, they can scarcely hope to succeed.

The condign punishment, for instance, of every delinquent official would have a most salutary effect on the public mind in its present wavering state. The population should be made clearly acquainted with their rights, so that they may know immediately when they are wronged, and how and where to obtain redress.

I would advocate the establishment in the chief towns of Municipal Councils, to which foreigners may be admitted as members. The plan of an institution of that character in Salonica has already been formed, and it awaits but the sanction of the Porte to be called into activity.

22. If the Government supported them at its own expense it would be very possible to establish them; although I apprehend some difficulty in inducing the Christians and Jews to send their children to be educated along with Turkish children, because, as they have their own schools, they would naturally give them the preference.

I do not think either, were the Christians and Jews to do so, that sympathy would be promoted to any useful degree between the pupils of different creeds, because the parents would be careful to destroy their tendencies to form friendships, and home influences would be paramount to all others. Thus, the object for which, I conceive, the proposal to establish mixed free-schools has been put forward, that of transfusing the various elements of mutual aversion and discord into one common bond of harmony, however desirable it might be, would be defeated.

The Christians complain that the Government interferes too much with their selection of teachers and professors. The Government is, however, justified, to a certain extent, in inquiring into the character and the political tendencies of foreigners who come to teach in the schools in Turkey; for there can be no doubt that many of those who are imported from Greece are apt to infuse into the youthful mind of their pupils ideas of national independence which, at a mature age, cannot but weaken their allegiance to their legitimate Sovereign.

23. That would greatly please the Christians, but, practically, I do not think it would answer. The success of the experiment would, of course, mainly depend upon the character, education, and political morality of the person selected for the office. But in any case, I think the Christian Vice-Governor would be tempted to consider himself as the Turkish Governor's rival; so that unless the two perfectly agreed in opinion and in temper, they would be continually trying to undermine one another, and great confusion, detrimental to the true interests of the country, would inevitably ensue.

Instead of a Christian Vice-Governor, I would have joint Christian and Turkish Secretaries attached to the Governor, both appointed by the Porte; and, as suggested in Answer No. 17, they should have a seat in the Provincial Council. Their duties would have to be clearly defined, but their principal office would be that of acting as separate channels through which the interests of the Mussulman and Christian portions of the population could converge to the Council, where the common interest would be looked to, and in case of disagreement the Porte would have the means of deciding, or else of passing its veto, upon any measure agreed to which might appear objectionable.

I think it advisable to take the temporal authority out of the hands of the Clergy, so that they may be better able to attend to the spiritual welfare of the population, and to superintend, if requisite, the education of the young.

24. Although not prepared to define its extent, I am firmly persuaded, in my own mind, that it has been and is at work. No fairer field, perhaps, offers itself for the dissemination of ideas and the culture of sentiments which tend not only to promote division and discontent amongst the different classes, but likewise to excite the disaffection of the Christian races towards their rulers. The foreign agency employed is very subtle, as the emissaries are careful to avoid publicity. The Bulgarian race is tampered with by Russian influences, and when the fact is taken into consideration that the Greek Bishop at Kilkitch, in this Province, has been replaced by a Bulgarian Bishop who can afford to forego

the large income derived from his diocese, and that numbers of Bulgarian youths have been sent gratuitously from this country to Russia to be educated for the priesthood, it is difficult not to connect the Russian Government with the movement. The Greek clergy, depending from the Patriarch at Constantinople, are most indignant at the increasing encroachments on the domain of their Church which are taking place in Roumelia.

A few months ago a Greek printing establishment at Saloniea was closed by the Turkish authorities; and although the French Consul interested himself on behalf of the printer, it has not since been allowed to resume work. The ostensible but very justifiable cause for the proceedings of the Turkish authorities was that the sanction of the Porte extended only to the sale of printed books. The fact that led to the inquiry as to the printer's license was the discovery that he had printed and circulated in the country various papers connected with the propagation of Panslavism. I have been informed on good authority that the Turkish authorities have lately fallen upon a track which they believe will lead them to proof of Russian complicity with the printer in question.

The monasteries throughout the the country, and particularly the collection of them on Mount Athos, are the strongholds of the Greeks' and Russians' political hopes. These privileged establishments are, in fact, suspected of being repositories of arms and ammunition. Russia has lately renovated the Russian monastery on Mount Athos, which contains upwards of 200 monks, half of whom are Greeks. She has also made presents of vestments and pictures to the other nineteen monasteries. On a recent occasion I noticed the figure of a Russian eagle on the girdle worn by an Ionian monk belonging to another monastery on Mount Athos. The steamers of the Russian Imperial Steam-Navigation Company call at Mount Athos every week coming to or going from Salonica.

Lest it should be said that the conversions of Greeks and Jews to Protestantism produce division and discontent amongst the native population, I may emphatically state that such is not the case. The missionaries seek only to impart the light of the Gospel where it has been concealed from the people, and they scrupulously exclude every idea of forming their converts into a new nation looking to a foreign Power for direct protection. The Protestant missionaries are not political agents, as many of the other foreign missionaries are. A very large majority of the candidates to Protestantism have been rejected by the missionaries on account of it having been elicited during their term of probation that their object was either to obtain pecuniary relief or to be taken under the British protection. In the latter case they invariably had some particular personal interest to forward.

The Roman Catholics have lately undertaken the task of inducing the discontented Greeks of Cassandra to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, in return for which concession of conscience they hold out several worldly advantages to them, amongst others that of their protection against the oppression of their own clergy. The Greeks have been led to suppose that they will have the benefit of that protection, in case of need, from the French Government; and if they have not yet made up their minds upon the subject, it is because they have not yet had an opportunity of testing the value of the priests' conditional promises.

From the neighbouring State of Greece a continual stream of independent notions is poured into the Turkish provinces by means of the journals. Nothing is left unsaid that can possibly excite the Greek Christians in Turkey to hatred and contempt of their rulers. Every fault is wilfully exaggerated, and the grossest lies are invented by the journalists. Such statements unfortunately find an echo in the hearts of those whom they are specially intended to move: and I fear that much irreparable mischief has been done through this infectious poison.

25. About two years ago an inquiry took place at Salonica as to the right of a number of individuals alleged to be subjects of the Porte to hold Greek passports. The result was that few of them were proved to have any right to foreign passports, and the passports were taken away from the rest.

At Serres there are many subjects of the Porte who go to Austria, and return with Austrian passports. There is an Article of the Treaty of Sistow by virtue of a strained construction of which the Austrian agents in the European provinces of Turkey maintain their right to protect such persons as Austrians.

I am not aware that it is customary in this part of the country for subjects of the Porte to obtain passports for Greece and then exchange them for Russian passports. Had it been the custom I should have heard of it. There are very few Russian subjects here. I have heard that at Geortcha (in the province of Monastir) the custom has been very prevalent.

Salonica, July 20, 1860.

(Signed) CHARLES J. CALVERT,
Her Majesty's Consul at Monastir, late Her Majesty's Consul at Salonica.

No. 3.

Consul Longworth to Lord J. Russell.—(*Received August* 4.)

(No. 26.)

Belgrade, July 20, 1860.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith inclosed to your Lordship, the copy of a despatch, under date of the 14th instant, to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, containing a report of a conversation I had with the Grand Vizier at Widdin, and such facts and opinions relative to his mission of inquiry as I could obtain in Bulgaria.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. A. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure in No. 3.

Consul Longworth to Sir H. Bulwer.

Belgrade, July 14, 1860.

Sir,

IN pursuance of the instructions contained in your Excellency's despatch of the 6th ultimo, I have found means of communicating with the Grand Vizier at Widdin; and, while eliciting from him such facts and opinions as he was disposed to impart with respect to the results of his inquiry, and offering, in return, such suggestions as were dictated by my knowledge and observation of the places he has still to visit, I have been particularly careful to avoid all semblance of undue interference with his proceedings.

The candour and unreserve with which his Highness entered into these subjects I, in some measure, attribute to our intimacy at a former period, though many years had elapsed since our last meeting.

With reference to his mission, which had been already fulfilled in the Bulgarian Pashalics of Varna, Shumla, Rutschuk, and Widdin, he assured me he had met with nothing to warrant the charge of religious persecution advanced by Prince Gortchakoff. Not a single case of oppression experienced by Christians at the hands of Turks had been brought to his cognizance. His satisfaction at this result was, in some measure, troubled by the annoyance he felt at having been sent on an errand so futile to the provinces, at a time when he might have been profitably employed in the capital.

At Widdin, however, a petition had been presented to him subscribed with 300 signatures, and containing vague charges against the local authorities. This document he did not hesitate to characterize as spurious. He had traced it, he told me, to its source; meaning, I have no doubt, the Russian Consulate. It is a remarkable fact that M. Sokoloff, the Russian Consul, the party suspected, had been withdrawn from Widdin and transferred to Jerusalem only a few days before this investigation commenced. Before proceeding to his post, he paid visits to M. Balubine, the Russian Minister at Vienna, and to the Russian Consul-General for Servia at Semlin, where they met privately. There must doubtless have been some points upon which an explanation and understanding between these gentlemen was thought desirable. The complaints against the Local Government which M. Sokoloff had been able to get up and embody in a petition failed entirely to bear out the allegations of Prince Gortchakoff. Cases of outrage and cruelty, and of forced conversion to Islamism, could with no colour of probability be sustained in Bulgaria, nor could

any amount of subornation and suggestion enlist witnesses in support of them on the spot.

It may be fairly presumed that the hired emissaries from whom Prince Dolgorouky collected his information at Belgrade, applied with the usual exaggeration to Bulgaria, reports of atrocities committed in other provinces. I shall advert to these afterwards; and, with reference to the charges contained in the petition, I have now to observe that they are, for the most part, untenable, while others are frivolous; and the last thing put prominently forward as a grievance (that is, the appointment of their Bishops by the Patriarch of Constantinople,—a grievance of some centuries' standing), is a certain indication of the quarter whence the whole emanated. The immediate advantage contemplated by Russia in this movement is the substitution of Bulgarian Bishops, with a Patriarch at their head, for those of the Fanar. It is a result which would be cheaply purchased by many hard-fought campaigns, and a good equivalent for the exclusive Protectorate of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, which the last war with Russia was undertaken to avert.

With the orthodox hierarchy in her hands, she would have the entire control and headship of the Bulgarian nation, temporal power being in the East inseparable from spiritual. Fortunately for the Porte, these views neither originate with nor are easily disseminated among the Bulgarians. From all I can learn (and I have been at great pains to inform myself on the subject), this question of the hierarchy is either unknown to disregarded by the mass of the nation, to be found in the farms and villages. Notwithstanding the trouble and expense the Russian Government has been at to propagate it, it has made little progress beyond the immediate centres of agitation, such as Sofia, Philippopoli, and Widdin, where schools have been established under Russian auspices; they are of a preparatory kind both as regards persons and principles. The Bulgarian nation is too illiterate to supply without foreign assistance the necessary number of prelates for the new hierarchy. For similar objects and doubtless with the same motives, costly presents have been made to the Bulgarian churches; they consist of paintings, vases, vestments, and other ornaments. The Greek Bishop of Widdin informed me he had declined to accept presents of this kind for the church there; but they had been received at Gabrua, Sistov, Ternova, and other places in his diocese. In short, the solicitude of the Emperor of Russia for the welfare of these people is most remarkable; not only are they provided with schoolmasters, but books are composed and printed for their special edification at Odessa. And lastly, as would appear from what has occurred at Widdin, the same friendly hand has been engaged in preparing their petition to the Grand Vizier.

Besides the internal evidence as to the authorship of this document, it must be observed that the individual selected, after the withdrawal of M. Sokoloff, to present it to the Grand Vizier was a Rayah of the name of Zano, who had formerly a seat in the Medjlis, but had been expelled from it on a charge of bribery and corruption. He and another notable of the name of Elias are the notorious agents and hangers-on of the Russian Consulate. When called upon by the Grand Vizier to substantiate the statements and verify the signatures of the petition, he utterly failed in so doing. Very few of the latter could be identified, and the parties declared they had signed the document under the belief that it contained nothing but a remonstrance against the pig-tax.

The rest of the grievances enumerated could scarcely be viewed as serious.

1st. With reference to the refusal of the local authorities to allow the Christians to put up a church-bell, it may be remarked that this use of bells in the East has always been considered as tantamount to a recognition of Christianity being the established worship of the place. In some towns, therefore, inhabited almost exclusively by Christians, this concession has been made by the Government. But at Widdin, where more than three-fourths of the inhabitants are Turks, it would have involved an insult to their prejudices and a dangerous experiment on their forbearance. At a former period the Christians would not have dreamt of putting forward such a pretension; and it must be admitted that in all other respects there is no restriction on religious ceremonies, and not even on public processions.

2nd. It is stated in the petition that the Cadi, or Mussulman Judge, had arbitrarily interfered with the affairs of the Christian community; that is, in questions of inheritance and the administration of the property of minors. Proof

of such interference, however, though challenged and earnestly sought by the Grand Vizier, was wholly wanting; wanting at least at Widdin, though there may have been interference in other parts of the Empire. Indeed, I remember to have heard something of the kind complained of in Crete; and on this foundation, and no other probably, rests the charge in the Widdin petition. Nothing can more clearly illustrate the looseness of these charges in general.

3rd. It is represented that the Christians admitted as members into the Medjlis, or Municipal Council, were allowed no voice in its proceedings, and had, in fact, been silenced by the Pasha. This charge was fully investigated by the Grand Vizier, and proved to be unsupported by a shadow even of evidence. It was, moreover, denied most positively by the Bishop, who has himself a seat in the Medjlis. If the petitioners had been satisfied with affirming that the Christian members exercised little influence or authority in the Medjlis, the complaint would have been more plausible; though as regards Widdin, I am told it would, even when thus qualified, have been inapplicable. My own experience, however, leads me to infer that in many places, and I should say the majority of them, it were vain to look for independence of character in the Christian members of these Councils, not more from the domineering spirit of the Turks than their own disposition, which is crouching and corrupt; corruption and falsehood, indeed, are the chronic infirmities, though in a different degree, of the generation both Christian and Moslem. Time and education alone can effect a change for the better. The Government may, by its Edicts and Hatti-humayouns, hasten and advance such a reform; but I question very much whether more evil than good will not arise from proclaiming a social equality which is, in the present state of things and relations of society, morally impossible.

Equality before the law is that which must be first established; the only sort of equality, in fact, which can, under existing circumstances, be realized. And in connection with this, we come to the complaint in the petition—the only tangible point in it—relative to the rejection of Christian evidence in the Ottoman tribunals. In this respect, it cannot be denied there is room for amendment, not only at Widdin, but in every province of the Empire. A futile regulation has been enacted by which such evidence is admitted in an inferior Police Court, but excluded from the higher or Municipal Council, while the sentence passed in that where witnesses are heard has to be confirmed in the other where they are not. All this has the appearance of evasion—one of those half-measures which give satisfaction to nobody. Nor is this all: a distinction is drawn in the Hatti-humayoun itself between civil and criminal suits, Christian evidence being held to be admissible in the latter, but not in the former. The plea upon which it is defended is, however, specious enough; it is urged that the property of the Turks, particularly in districts where they are in a great relative minority, would be exposed to confiscation if, in the existing demoralized state of society, Christian testimony were taken in cases of this kind. But it may, on the other hand, be rejoined that much of this demoralization, as regards the indifference shown to perjury, both by Turks and Christians, may be traced to the lax and vicious principle acted upon in the Mussulman Courts, where, as the only means of securing justice to Christians, Mussulman false witnesses are permitted to give evidence on their behalf. The abolition of this practice would do more than anything else to purify these tribunals; but this can only be effectually accomplished by the admission of Christian evidence, instead of Mussulman perjury, as a matter of legal necessity. The "ulema," or the law authorities of Turkey, will have eventually either to do this, or to renounce the adjudication, together with the emoluments arising therefrom, of all Civil suits. Were the alternative resolutely put to them by the Porte, there can be little doubt what their decision would be. In the meanwhile, this is unquestionably the chief obstacle to any amelioration in the matter.

There is another abuse which calls urgently for correction, I mean the forcible abduction of Christian girls by Mahometans. It is not alluded to in the Widdin petition, and, indeed, is a crime by no means common in Bulgaria, nor, as I believe, in any other province, except Northern Albania. Still, it is one which should not be neglected by the Porte, for it is that, and that only, which has furnished the ground for the most serious of the charges advanced by Prince Gortchakoff, that is, the forced conversion of Christians to Islamism. Much has been said in extenuation of this practice of abduction. It is an old custom of these wild districts, and was formerly held to evince manly spirit on the part of the ravisher. It is asserted also, and I believe it, that the girls are frequently

consenting parties to their own abduction, and that the parents, by delaying to give them in marriage, with a view of appropriating their services as long as possible, indirectly bring this misfortune on themselves. But these palliatives, and others of the kind, which may be urged, are, I think, beside the question, which is simply if seduction and violence has been employed in removing these girls from the roof and protection of their parents. But instead of putting it to this issue, it has been the rule to force the party to appear before the tribunal which rejects Christian evidence, and to dispose of the affair summarily, by compelling her to declare herself a Christian or a Mahometan.

Against this mode of procedure I deemed it my duty to make a determined stand, more than six years ago, at Monastir. I insisted on all such cases being treated as police-matters and not questions of religion, which, I maintained, was outraged by being made a cloak for such disorders. I appealed also to firmans and Vizirial letters, in which force, as a means of proselytism, was strictly forbidden. I, finally, obtained my point, and the best results followed. In all such cases, which rapidly diminished in number, the girls were forthwith restored to their families and their ravishers punished as they deserved. These proceedings were duly reported to Constantinople, but there a different view seems to have prevailed on the question, which it flattered the fanaticism of all parties, and of Greeks as well as Turks, to invest, as before, with a religious character. Various expedients were devised, and, among others, that of sequestering the the victim of abduction for three days in the residence of the bishop previous to her profession in the faith in the Medjlis.

But this way of proceeding, after occasioning much scandal and recrimination, has been definitively abandoned. The question, however, should be set at rest; and the Porte herself, seeing the imputations it exposes her to, is chiefly interested in not leaving it open any longer. The most practical solution is, in my opinion, that above suggested.

It was gratifying, therefore, to find that the Grand Vizier took the same view of the matter; and what is more, he promised me he would do his best to enforce it. His Highness, moreover, agreed in the opinion I expressed that this and the question of Christian evidence are the two main points to which, as sources of bitter feeling and discussion, the attention of the Porte should now be directed. As to eradicating, by any summary process, mere religious antipathies, which were mutual between the Turks and Christians, the only difference being that the Turks, as masters, had been under greater temptation to display them, the task was, he said, hopeless; all that could be done was to deal with their effects in the shape of overt acts. It was, at the same time, a great mistake to suppose that the oppression complained of had been systematic or uniform. The contrary, indeed, was the case. The result of the Ottoman conquest had been to establish the supremacy of one people over another, while the Government had, from the democratic tendencies of Islamism, been much more popular in its essence than was generally imagined. It was a fact, which did honour to the Turks, that living in juxtaposition with conquered races, they had discovered a degree of toleration and forbearance to which, considering they were uncontrolled, history could not furnish a parallel. Their hand, it is true, had been heavier on the Christians in some parts of the Empire than it had been in others, and this when a rude, popular authority was exercised, was to have been expected as the natural consequence of different circumstances in different provinces. In Bulgaria and on the Danube, where the Turks garrisoned the fortresses and occupied, in force, the considerable towns, the pressure on the Rayahs might have been greater in their immediate neighbourhood; but they were comparatively unmolested in the distant villages of the plains and the Balkans. In Albania the instincts of race are stronger than the prejudices of religion; and it was remarkable that though Christians of a race, in their estimation, inferior, such as the Bulgarians, who live among them, are treated with harshness and contumely, Christians of Albanian blood are allowed to wear their arms, and are independent almost as themselves. The province in which Christians have had most reason to complain was Bosnia: the question is, there, one of noble and serf, of a privileged and unprivileged class, precisely analogous to that which now occupies the Russian Government, which, familiar as it must be with its difficulties, should be more indulgent to a neighbouring State engaged in the task of solving them like itself. Turkey had, in fact, made greater progress in it; but in Bosnia the question of privilege was complicated

by religious considerations, the nobles having, at a former period, embraced Mahometanism to preserve their estates, which were thus conditionally assured to them. Each of the other provinces had passed through its peculiar ordeal, and a separate inquiry into the past and present condition of each would tend entirely to disprove the charge of systematic oppression. It was, in truth, the absence of anything like system or uniformity that rendered it difficult for the Porte to adopt any general régime for the amelioration of the condition of the Christians.

I give the above remarks as the substance rather of my conversation with the Grand Vizier than a distinct recapitulation of what was said on either side, which, as our views were almost identical, is the less necessary; but with reference to the last observation, I ventured to submit to his Highness, whether it might not have been better, under the circumstances he had described, to regulate and adopt, more than had been yet attempted, the administration of the provinces to the different degrees of civilization developed in each. In Roumelia, where I had resided, and in other Pashalics which I had visited, I had acquired the conviction that the double Government of the Pasha and the Medjlis worked badly; local influences, adverse to Christian interests, prevailed in those Councils, nor was the matter mended much by the admission of Christian members, who were for the most part timid and corrupt. The best protectors of the Christians were the functionaries, who, deriving their authority immediately from the Porte, are more likely, if duly invested with power and responsibility, to be inspired by the liberal sentiments which the Porte professes towards the Christians under her rule. The Pasha might seek for information and advice from his Medjlis, but should not be controlled by it.

In referring to the general subject of Ottoman administration, fiscal, military, and judicial, I kept carefully within the bounds of friendly counsel and criticism, which have been repeatedly enjoined by your Excellency, and his Highness on that account perhaps spoke with less reserve. Though claiming credit for what had been done by the Sultan's Government, he acknowledged that he had found much to grieve and disappoint him, and among other things he thought that sufficient vigour had not been exerted in the repression of brigandage. In the severity he had himself displayed in the punishment of offenders, he had admitted no distinction between Christians and Mussulmans; examples had also been made which he trusted would not be without their effect on another sort of brigandage—the official delinquency by which he allowed that the administration, both civil and military, was still by far too much tainted; but where, in the backward state of morals and of education, find a better class of functionaries?

A series of questions relative to Turkish administration has been lately addressed by your Excellency to Her Majesty's Consular Body: the attention I have given to them will, I trust, be sufficiently apparent from the tenour of this report. None of these has impressed me as being more significant and suggestive in their import than that accompanied by the caution not to adopt an impossible standard of comparison. The least exceptionable, perhaps, must be sought, certainly not in the particular constitutional form with which we may be most conversant, but rather in Asiatic Governments, or in that of Russia, or in such of the European as are least advanced or most retrograde. Comparison even with these might not be altogether satisfactory, and, if I am not deceived, the only true measure of the merits of a Government is the social and moral development of the people ruled by it. No administration, be it liberal or despotic, Mahometan or Christian, ought to be far behind or can be much in advance of this condition. This is a test, the application of which to herself the Porte might accept with confidence. And the other criterion of progress proposed by your Excellency, that of time, or the Turkey of to-day compared with the Turkey of a given number of years ago, is one which I doubt not would be still more favourable to her.

This was a standard which in my conversation with the Grand Vizier naturally occurred to both of us. Almost a quarter of a century, including the most eventful years of Turkish history, had elapsed since we had last seen or conversed with each other: I had known him in early life, at the commencement of his career, when his fortunes, like those of most Turkish subaltern officers, consisted of little else than hopes and aspirations, which, if I deemed them extravagant, were, to do him justice, honourable and patriotic. Our acquaintance was now renewed, when he had outgrown even those aspirations, and in summing up the progress and all that had been accomplished during that interval, and in which he had, with no common zeal, energy, and singleness of purpose, borne his part, it was feelingly and with honest pride that he appealed to me, as to one resident in the country and not ignorant of its affairs, whether the result was not such as they could fairly boast of.

"You are doubtless aware," he said, "that our revenue, which thirty years years ago was not 4,000,000*l.* now amounts to 11,000,000*l.* sterling; that our commerce and agriculture have made commensurate strides; that the population of the Empire, and particularly the Christian part of it, has been much and rapidly augmented. Is such a fact consistent with the oppression they are still said to be groaning under?"

In support of his assertions with respect to the increase of trade, his Highness entered into some interesting particulars connected with the exportation of silk, as estimated by the Customs Returns; and he finally adverted to the progress made in their military organization, which, though still deficient in many respects, yet, if compared with what it was twenty years ago, must be by any competent judge admitted to be extraordinary. The Porte, he said, was most deeply interested in keeping up the numerical strength and efficiency of her army, not only as a security against foreign aggression, but as a preservative against anarchy in the provinces. To put down this, and assist in the great and necessary work of centralization, a powerful army was more than ever indispensable.

"In respect, however, to the extent to which anarchy still prevails, you must confess," he said, "that we have, again, reason to congratulate ourselves. You can remember the time when we were emerging from a far more chaotic state of things; when, to instance only our European provinces, they were, with some solitary exceptions, all of them in arms against each other, or against the authority of the Sovereign, whom the Pashas of Epirus, Widdin, and Rustchuk, and the Servians, Bosnians, and Albanians, held equally at defiance. But order is now the rule, and anarchy the exception. Give us but fair play, and doubt not we can defend our rights and regenerate our Empire."

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. A. LONGWORTH.

No. 4.

Consul-General Green to Lord J. Russell.—(*Received August* 4.)

(No. 37.)

My Lord, *Bucharest, July* 23, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to transmit a copy of a despatch I have received from Vice-Consul Mayers, from Rustchuk, forwarding to me a copy of a despatch addressed to the Ambassador, and a translation of the Grand Vizier's memorandum as to the reforms to be introduced into Bulgaria.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. GREEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 4.

Vice-Consul Mayers to Consul-General Green.

Sir, *Rustchuk, July* 18, 1860.

ON the 7th instant I transmitted to his Excellency Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople a copy of the original Memorandum of the various reforms to be introduced into this Province, which the Grand Vizier left here with the Pasha for immediate execution.

As I had not the means of getting the document in question translated into any language likely to be understood by his Excellency, I had no other alternative but to send it in the original Turkish, and requested his Excellency to let me have a translated copy of it.

I

I have, however, since succeeded in obtaining, from a distant part of the country, a translated summary of the said Memorandum, a copy of which I have the honour to forward to you herewith.

I also inclose a copy of my despatch which I addressed to his Excellency on the 15th instant, about the proceedings of the Grand Vizier at Widdin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) S. MAYERS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 4.

Translated Summary of the Vizirial Instructions to the Governors of the Provinces of Silistria and of Widdin.

1. *Mesures contre le Brigandage.* — LES officiers et soldats de police (Zabtyehs) seront recrutés parmis des hommes jouissant parmi les populations d'une bonne réputation sous les rapports de moralité, de capacité, et d'activité.

Les Zabtyehs qui seront en mission dans les villages seront munis de billets (tezkéreh), émanant des autorités qui les auront employés; tout individu se disant Zabtyeh qui n'en sera pas muni sera arrêté par les populations et conduit devant les autorités.

Dans chaque village les individus seront liées par une solidarité mutuelle qui les engagera à dénoncer celui d'entre eux qui servira de repère aux brigands ou qui sera de connivance avec eux; ainsi tous les habitants se constitueront garants les uns pour les autres tant sous ce rapport que sous celui des viols et autres crimes; les individus dont la moralité ne sera pas garantie par ces concitoyens seront traités comme ils le méritent.

Les crimes d'enlèvement de jeunes filles sera puni avec toute la sévérité de la loi.

Les autorités veilleront à ce que les hommes de recrue qui se rendent à leurs corps ne se livrassent à aucun acte d'excès envers les populations; les Commandants des convoies de ces recrues devront recevoir de la part des autorités tous les avertissements qui peuvent leur faire redoubler d'attention.

2. *Mesures contre les Vexations.*—Les entrepreneurs des dimes et autres impôts ne percevront que dans les limites prescrites par les ordres Vizirials dont ils seront munis; ils ne se permettront aucun contrainte envers les populations; ils n'exigeront d'elles le transport des denrées provenant des dimes que jusqu'à l'échelle la plus proche, c'est-à-dire, jusqu'à une échelle dont la distance n'excède pas une journée de marche (allée et retour); ils payeront pour cette distance trois paras par kileh de Stamboul de denrée; pour les distances plus étendues il sera procédé sous les yeux des Conseils locaux entre les entrepreneurs et les cultivateurs à la conclusion d'un marché de transport dans toutes les règles et sous la condition expresse de la bonne volonté des cultivateurs de s'en charger.

Les Caimacams et les Mudirs feront des tournées périodiques dans leurs districts, soit à l'époque des répartitions des dîmes, soit à d'autres époques, pour s'assurer de l'exécution de ces prescriptions dans toute leur intégrité, pour en instruire les populations elles-mêmes, et pour poursuivre les coupables qui s'y trouveraient en contravention.

Aucun entrepreneur d'impôt ni son adhérant, aucun fonctionnaire de quelque classe qu'il soit, n'a le droit d'exiger des villageois nourriture ou fourrage, ni aucun autre objet, ni aucune corvée, sans qu'il soit dûment obligé d'en payer le montant ou le salaire; les Zabtyehs payeront ou directement ou par des quittances qui, envoyées aux chefs-lieux, serviront à la fin de chaque mois des pièces pour les retenues à faire sur les soldes des Zabtyehs au profit des habitants qui leur auront fourni des objets.

Les Gouverneurs publieront dans le plus bref délai toutes ces mesures qui ont pour but d'écarter les vexations: ces publications seront faites dans chaque village dans les langues Turque, Bulgare, et Grecque, afin que les populations soit suffisamment instruites de leurs droits et qu'elles puissent formuler librement leurs plaintes aux autorités dans les cas d'infraction; les Mouhtars et les

Khodja-Bachis seront prévenus aussi que toute négligence de leur part dans l'exécution de ces prescriptions sera rigoureusement punie.

Les voitures, les chevaux et les autres moyens de transport devront être soumis à des prix réglementaires qui seront à tant par heure; aucun passager ne pourra se permettre de vouloir payer au-dessous de ces taux, comme aussi aucun fournisseur de ces moyens de transport ne pourra se permettre de demander une loyée au-dessus du même taux.

Aucun passager, fonctionnaire, ou autre, n'a le droit d'exiger un logement chez les villageois à moins qu'il n'y ait absence d'auberge ou d'autres lieux spécialement affectés aux passagers; dans ce cas, c'est au Mouhtar que les passagers auront à s'adresser pour obtenir le logement et autres objets à leurs usages moyennant le prix.

3. *Mesures pour l'Equité de Répartition des Impôts.*—Les impôts seront répartis sur un pied d'égalité parfaite suivant la fortune des individus et la population des villages.

Le dénombrement des bestiaux pour l'imposition de cet article se fera dans chaque village en présence du Mouhtar, de l'Imam, du Mouhtir et des Khodja-Bashis; chaque propriétaire recevra une liste indiquant le nombre des bestiaux qu'on lui aura compté; les impôts ayant été perçus d'après ces listes et après le payement intégral par les entrepreneurs du logement et des objets qu'ils auront consommés dans le village, ces entrepreneurs délivreront des quittances qui serviront plus tard et dans des cas de réclamation à vérifier les chiffres des impôts qu'ils auront perçus.

4. *Justice et Administration.*—Les Conseils de Mudirliks (Communes) ne différeront sous aucun prétexte l'expédition des affaires en matière criminelle ou de délit plus d'une semaine; ils adresseront dans ce délai au plus tard les dossiers de leurs enquêtes au siège du Vali (Gouverneur-Général); les Valis ne mettront aucun retard dans le jugement des affaires et les exécutions qui sont de leur ressort; ils ne mettront aucun retard dans l'expédition des affaires de l'ordre à renvoyer à Constantinople. Les Gouverneurs auront à veiller aussi que les Cadis ne perçoivent pas des frais au-dessus de la légalité; ils veilleront à ce que les emprisonnements pour des matières civiles soient prononcés exclusivement sur des sentences des Mehkémehs, et non pas sur de simples avis des Secrétaires des Mehkémehs; les individus dont l'insolvabilité pour une dette sera reconnue auront à fournir des garants solvables qui répondront de leurs payements dans des délais assignés; cette mesure ne doit jamais être remplacée par un emprisonnement, qui ne garantirait aucun avantage pour les créanciers.

Pour mettre les villages à couvert des vexations de leurs propres autorités, Mouhtar, Mouhtir, &c., qui peuvent immoler à leurs intérêts particuliers ceux de leurs concitoyens, la nomination de ces autorités, tout en demeurant à l'élection, sera entourée pour l'avenir d'une garantie plus efficace; à cet effet il aura un seul Mouhtar pour un petit village et deux pour un village d'un plus grand développement sous les noms de premier et deuxième Mouhtars; l'un de ces derniers sera pris parmi la population Chrétienne pour les villages de composition mixte. Ces autorités, élues aux choix de la population, seront garantis par dix à quinze personnes des notabilités et des vieillards du village, lesquels s'engageront par un acte signé de leurs mains à répondre de la moralité des Mouhtars: ceux-ci vaqueront aux affaires des communes en conseil avec les vieillards, et les Hodjas des localités; ces derniers, ainsi que les prêtres des villages Chrétiens ou mixtes, tiendront journal des faits qui concernent l'ordre et la sécurité, tel que les brigandages, vols, &c. Les Mouhtars présenteront chaque mois ces journaux aux chef-lieux de leurs districts; ces visites mensuels des Mouhtars aux chef-lieux serviront d'occasion aux Mouhtars pour leur donner toutes les instructions verbales ou écrites dans un sens qui les mettra de plus en plus au courant de leurs fonctions et qui servira à l'instruction des populations sur leurs propres droits ainsi que sur leurs devoirs.

Des individus adonnés à des manœuvres coupables font le tour des villages pour recueillir des signatures sur une feuille blanche et pour en faire ensuite des pétitions collectives rédigées dans un sens voulu; les autorités veilleront à ce que ces manœuvres n'aient pas lieu et redoubleront d'attention pour les pétitions collectives qui leur parviendront afin de distinguer celles qui se rapportent à des vraies expressions des vœux des populations de celles qui ne sont rédigées que dans des vues exclusives et par des procédés coupables.

Il est de notoriété que des sujets de la Sublime Porte se font admettre sous

la protection des Agents des Puissances étrangères, qui leur délivrent des passe-ports ; s'il est vrai que les lois de notre pays refusent cette faculté aux nationaux Turcs autant que les Traités qui règlent les rapports du Gouvernement avec les autres Puissances refusent aux Agents de ces dernières une pareille latitude, il est vrai d'un autre côté qu'une mauvaise administration qui laisse en souffrance les intérêts des sujets est une des premières causes qui produisent cet effet. Ainsi les Gouverneurs, tout en se renfermant dans les termes de la loi et des Traités qui leur prescrivent de ne pas prendre en considération aucune qualité de protégé dans les nationaux Turcs, et tout en agissant envers ces protégés comme envers des sujets de la Sublime Porte, sauf à prévenir ceux d'entre eux qui persisteraient à faire valoir leur qualité de protégé qu'ils risquent d'encourir l'obligation d'abandonner les terres dites de "miri" qu'ils ont dans leur possession et de vendre leurs autres possessions immobilières dans un délai déterminé pour s'éloigner de la Turquie, sauf à rendre compte à la Sublime Porte des cas pour lesquels ce premier avertissement n'aura pas produit l'effet de les ramener de la protection étrangère, les Gouverneurs, disons-nous, chercheront le remède de cet abus dans l'exercice d'une administration pleine d'équité et de sollicitude envers tous les étrangers qui résident ou qui voyagent dans le pays, et qui, placés par leur qualité sous l'égide hospitalière des Traités en vigueur, doivent jouir comme par le passé de toute la protection spéciale des Gouvernements Locaux et de leurs égards, sans toutefois qu'il leur soit fait aucune faveur qui serait en contradiction avec la loi dans les affaires qu'ils peuvent avoir avec les sujets de la Sublime Porte ; enfin, les Gouverneurs veilleront de tous leurs pouvoirs à ce que la justice soit égale pour toutes les différentes classes des populations de quelque condition et de quelque nationalité qu'elles soient.

Les conversions d'une religion dans une autre ne doivent être confirmées qu'en présence des pères, mères, ou tuteurs, et des Ministres du Culte auquel appartiendra le rénégat ; le principe de la liberté de conscience exige qu'avant la confirmation d'une conversion les autorités s'assurent, par les moyens les plus complets et les plus couchants, que le rénégat agit d'après son libre arbitre et en dehors de toute contrainte ; les enlèvements de jeunes filles et leur conversion par contrainte à l'Islamisme dans le but de les épouser constituent un crime contre lequel les autorités séviront avec toutes les rigueurs de la loi.

Inclosure 3 in No. 4.

Vice-Consul Mayers to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Rustchuk, July* 15, 1860.

KIPRISLI MEHEMED PASHA left Widdin on the 5th instant, for Lom, Nisha, Serajevo, and Mostar.

From the last place he intended to proceed to Cattaro, and embark there for Scutari, Yanina, Monastir, Salonica, and Adrianople, and thence return to the capital.

Such is the line of road his Highness proposed to follow, provided nothing happens to make him alter it.

The Grand Vizier's stay at Widdin had been marked by no important event. The whole week he remained in the place had been taken up by attending to the numerous petitions which he received from the population about ordinary individual affairs. The only question bearing a universal character which was brought before the Grand Vizier is the consideration of compelling a large portion of the inhabitants of Widdin, consisting of 2,500 families, who had been established for many years near the fortifications, to withdraw within a certain distance which the military authorities point out to them.

His Highness appointed a Commission to examine into this question, and as Ismail Pasha, Commander of the Division in Bulgaria, is to preside over the said Commission, there is every reason to hope that its report will be of a nature as to put a stop to the unreasonable demands of the military authorities.

The Israelites of Widdin have also benefited by the Grand Vizier's visit, and obtained the permission of erecting a synagogue which the authorities denied them up to this day.

His Highness in quitting Widdin left with Said Pasha the identical instructions a copy of which I had the honour to transmit to your Excellency in my despatch of the 7th instant, and I am sure your Excellency will be pleased to hear that his Highness, probably struck with the liberal ideas, great intelligence, and indefatigable energy of Ismail Pasha, entrusted him with the control over the execution of these instructions, and furnished him with a Vizirial letter which authorises him to remonstrate whenever he may find these instructions not properly executed by the Civil authorities.

Orders have already been sent by Ismail Pasha to the various officers under his command and stationed in the principal towns of Bulgaria to proceed to the different districts to watch over the proceedings of the Civil authorities, and report to him regularly.

These officers will also at the same time endeavour to apprehend the brigands who at this moment disturb the province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) S. MAYERS.

No. 5.

Consul Finn to Lord J. Russell.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 21.)

My Lord, *Jerusalem, July* 19, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, as directed by his Excellency Sir Henry Bulwer, a copy of my replies to the questions addressed me in a circular despatch dated Constantinople, June 11, 1860.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JAMES FINN.

Inclosure in No. 5.

Answers to Queries.

1. IN point of regular orderly government, and of development of resources and of internal communication, this Province is far behind most, if not all, European countries, and, as far as I can learn, behind Egypt, though the rural population is more powerful and richer than that of Egypt. The east and south borders are infested by Bedouins. These lawless people are encroaching more of late, but are great cowards, and could be easily repressed. Palestine is seriously underpopulated, and consequently large tracts lie waste.

2. Over the whole Province the Mussulmans are in great majority, and in the important towns, Nablous, Safed, Hebron, and Gaza, they are dominant, and have everything in their own hands; while in Jerusalem the Mussulman members do not very largely exceed that of the Christians, while the Jews almost equal them both together. In the important villages of Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Bait Jala, the Christians are by far in majority. In the sea-ports of Caiffa the Europeans, and the native Christians together, are considerable in number. In Tiberias nearly all are Jews; but in Acre and Saida Mussulmans predominate. Thus the numercial and even the moral weight is decidedly in favour of the Mussulmans, who hold the strong posts of Jerusalem, Acre, Nablous, Hebron, and Gaza; while in places of religious interest, as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth, the Christians have a strong footing and influence by means of their high ecclesiastics and the large fluctuating population of European pilgrims, also the feeling of influence of European nations.

3. The Christians are generally dealers in merchandize of both local and foreign goods, but the principal native exporters and merchants are Moslems. The supply of the absolute necessaries of life, such as corn, meat, charcoal, is chiefly in the hands of Mussulmans, occupants of towns, on account of their connection with the agricultural population, which is chiefly Mussulman.

Artisans of the better kind are all Jews or Christians.

The bulk of landed and house property is in the hands of Mussulmans throughout the Province; although in the city of Jerusalem, the Greek Convent,

i.e., ecclesiastics, dispensers of their treasury, are proprietors to a large extent, also, of cultivable land around the city. Their acquisitions are being actively increased.

In Bethlehem and Bait Jala most of the houses and cultivable land are in the hands of Christians.

4. Native Christians are precisely on equal terms with Mussulmans in regard to the tenure of landed property, though in acquiring it they are exposed to pecuniary and other annoyances to which a Moslem would not be exposed.

5. Difficulties are put in the way of Christians exercising some trades which have been of old time in the hands of the Moslems.

6. There is far more activity and enterprise among Christian than among Mussulman peasants, and the fruit is seen in their improved houses, dresses, and food.

7. In the Mehkemeh or Cadi's Court, non-Mussulman evidence is always refused. In the various Medjlises some subterfuge is always sought for declining to receive non-Mussulman evidence against a Mussulman, or recording it under the technical name of witness. These Courts and the Pasha will rather condemn at once a Mussulman in favour of a Christian, without recording testimony, than accept non-Moslem evidence. Evidence of Christian against Christian or Jew, or *vice versâ*, *i.e.*, non-Moslem against non-Moslem, is always received.

8. In this Province the Mutked periods are:—

(1.) Before the Egyptian occupation.

(2.) During the Egyptian occupation.

(3.) After the Egyptian occupation, beginning in 1841, to the war with Russia, 1853.

(4.) During that war.

(5.) Since the peace.

The condition of the Christians was lowest and inconceivably degraded previous to the Egyptian occupation.

The condition of the Christians during the Egyptian period was one of greater liberty and comfort than at present.

There was a reaction in favour of the Mussulmans after the expulsion of the Egyptian, though until 1853 this was much modified by the advancing influence of Consulates, and of Europeans generally.

During the Russian war the condition of Christians was improved, and many instances have been brought to my notice of insolent Christian behaviour towards Mussulmans, the former having Consulates to lean upon.

Since the war, another reaction has taken place which is, in most respects, anti-Christian, and, on the part of the Governors, anti-European.

9. No offices of trust are confided to Christians, either in local government or in military service, or even in police. They are essentially the governed class, and the Mussulmans the governors.

10. Excepting in Jerusalem, where they are too much priest-ridden, the Christians do wish to serve personally in the army instead of paying the substitution-tax, and consider that they and their people would gain by it in consideration. I am told that, in several parts of Syria, the youthful Christian population have petitioned for the privilege of serving personally in the army, even without requiring to be placed in separate companies or regiments.

11. Difficulty is always made till an order is obtained from Constantinople for building new churches; and such orders, when obtained, have been hitherto couched in such vague terms as to give rise to needless vexations and long delays. The disposition is here rather towards hindrance than otherwise.

I have not heard of Christians asking for steeples. Bells are in common use in towns where Christians are numerous; in others they are not permitted, on account of the fanatical feeling in the majority of inhabitants. Their use, however, only dates from the last few years, except in the Lebanon, where they have been long in use.

12. Oppression against Christians usually begins with the fanatic populace, but it is neither repressed nor punished by the Government; a remarkable instance of which is presented in our Nablous case of April 1856. There was another case in Gaza in 1856. But Sureya Pasha showed a disposition to depress Christians on his first arrival; for instance, in imprisonment of the Coptic priest and deacon in the common prison. The popular fanaticism never breaks out until the fanatical tendency of the Governor is visible.

13. Mussulmans have no more dislike to Protestants than to other Christians,—indeed, I have always found it to be less. When persecution has been suffered by Protestants, it always arose from, and was conducted by, ecclesiastics of other Christian sects, who generally employ the Moslems to carry out their measures.

14. I believe not; though, in the two leading sects, Latin and Greek, whose ecclesiastics are chiefly foreigners, there is a decided tendency to prevent the worldly advancement of their native congregations.

15. Christians are admitted as members of the Medjlises by virtue of laws of the Central Government, but the number of the members proportioned to the number of the sect is not equal to the proportion of the Mussulman members to the number of their sect. For instance, the Jews, who nearly equal the Christians and Mussulmans together, have but one member in each Medjlis; the Christians, who are nearly equal to the Mussulmans, have but one member of each sect in each Medjlis: while the Mussulman members are as numerous as the Pasha pleases to make them,—generally six or seven.

They are barely tolerated by the Mussulman members, and are always placed in lower seats: they have not the courage to make use of the privileges as intended. I sometimes hear of their placing their seals falsely to mazbattas, merely from fear of displeasing the Mussulman members.

The tone of proceedings in the Medjlis is always more unfavourable to progress than that of the Turkish officials.

16. If, in the original constitution of a judicial Medjlis, it was intended to approximate to the nature of trial by jury, which it does in some of its superficial features, it fails in the essential quality of being a reference to the defendant's equals; for the Medjlis is composed of the aristocracy of a ruling class, and the admission of a few timid representatives from other classes does not, in practice, effect the least difference in the domineering tone and the family combinations of the rest.

And, as in any other country, it is here also necessary that before constituting any body into a jury, there must be a sufficient degree of moral sense and public virtue among the members of whom it is composed. It is also necessary for any institution intended to approach the character of a jury, that it should not be a permanent board. The working of the system of the Civil Medjlis in this country does not recommend it to my approbation; for,

(1.) It is composed of an oligarchical knot of families who have, from time immemorial, had the whole agricultural population in the same relation to them as the clients of the ancient Romans to the Patrons. Each village has one or other of these Effendis for its Patron with the Government, and, in return, makes him pecuniary presents, and supplies his household with grain, oil, &c.

Within the city, also, each convent has its Patron in the Medjlis. Thus the Bash Katib takes a pleasure in proclaiming, "My flesh, and bones, and blood, and skin, are all belonging to the Greek Convent." And he is enormously rich: his sons and nephews are Patrons of other institutions. Another Effendi has the Armenian Convent for his permanent client, and another the Latin. Abdallah Effendi Wafa is a servant of the French Consulate; and so forth.

(2.) The Medjlis is permanent, with a rare instance of dismissal of a member and substitution of another by the Pasha. The present Pasha has done more than any of his predecessors in this way; he has even dismissed representatives of ancient families, and put in their places shopkeepers from the bazaars. This, although slowly done, is still objectionable; if carried out in full, it converts the Medjlis from being an oligarchy into being an instrument of the Pasha personally—the new members being entirely subservient to him; and this is not a desirable institution for the administration of public justice. Measures which I would suggest as most calculated to attain the end of equal and prompt justice, with the most simple and least expensive forms, as suited to the habits and feelings prevailing here, are as follows:—

(1.) The abolition of Civic Medjlises.

(2.) The appointment of one Judge for the Crown from each Pashalic, with Secretaries and a minor Judge in two or three other towns (not more) of the same Pashalic.

(3.) This principal Judge to be highly paid and of high rank, so as to have much to lose in case of failing in duty, and so as to be less exposed to temptation of bribery.

(4.) The Judge might be chosen from one of the principal Moslem families of Jerusalem.

(5.) He should be removable every two years, but removable in extremely good cases.

(6.) The law to be administered should be that of the Turkish Canons, not that of the Cadi in the Mehkemeh.

(7.) The Courts to be perfectly open to the public, and public reporters not to be disallowed.

(8.) All evidence equal.

(9.) Full minutes kept on record.

(10.) Appeal to the Pasha, as at present, should be permitted until the working of the new system.

In making the above propositions I do not desire to throw any reproach on the primitive Mahometan law, for a country in which all or nearly all the population is Mahometan; but it has the two faults—of partiality to one race or creed, and being corrupted to its core by traditions, out of which any opinion desired by a corrupt Judge can be obtained.

The system of daily and prompt justice is that which commends itself to the disposition of Oriental people.

The working details respecting the connection between the inferior Judge with the principal Judge, and the connection of the latter with the Pasha, can be left for consideration.

There remains yet one point, namely, what to do with the present oligarchy of Effendis. It is not desirable to cause or allow them to combine in contravention of the central measures of Government, so as to thwart any object but the interest of their old Committee Boards. There will always be offices of Government for them to hold, such as that of the Nakeeb, the Bashi Katib, the Cadi, the Mufti, and various Special Commissions. Should the principal Judge be appointed from among their number, the competition for that honour will have a salutary effect; and when excluded from their present idle mode of letting offices fall into their hands, their sons may find it desirable to serve in the army, and thus raise the character of that service.

18. I have heard of no case of conversion to Mahometanism, except of two females marrying. On the contrary, I have known cases of Mussulmans embracing Christianity when they or their parents have been Christians previously, and one remarkable case exists at this time of a Moslem of uninterrupted origin becoming a Christian, and remaining unmolested in Jerusalem.

19. There are but very few cases of females embracing the Moslem religion; when they do, it is invariably from worldly motives. In the two cases I have known they were both Jewesses, and one returned to her friends in a few days.

20. My answer to this is contained in that to No. 17.

21. We want a Bank, or branches of a National Bank, to regulate the rates of exchange in equality with that of the capital, which no power of the Sultan can effect, and to bring down the enormous rates of interest taken in this country.

We want to have taxes levied by the Government itself, instead of by farmers, who cheat both sides, and enrich only themselves.

The system of upper Sheikhs or Nazirs should be abolished, and every village Sheikh should be brought into direct contact with the Government for payment of taxes and for everything else. Under the old plan the system of responsible Nazirs was the easiest and most effectual for keeping remote districts in order; but it gives rise to a variety of abuses and oppression of the peasantry. It would not, however, be safe to abolish it without at the same time establishing a strong military post in each district. The soldiery should be prevented from levying their provisions from the peasantry in the villages where they may be stationed.

We want roads and bridges to facilitate trade, and abolish such anomalies as the prices of grain being often double in the interior towns the prices at the sea-ports.

The military and administrative measures of government would also be carried on with greater facility and at less cost.

We want to have the unruly and cowardly Bedouin regarded with less terror by Turkish officials, and for this purpose the use of an occasional shrapnel, so that the peaceful agricultural population may be allowed to increase,

instead of the savages increasing to destroy their produce and lives. Neither trade nor agriculture will be developed as they should be until roads are made, till Bedouin are kept back, till taxes are levied by the Government itself, and some order introduced into money affairs.

On the subject of agricultural colonization, I shall have the honour to propound my ideas in a separate despatch.

In conclusion, I have to observe that the above are remarks in brief on subjects of the highest importance; and that especially the suggestions for improvements desirable in this country might be much amplified if they had been made the subject of a separate despatch.

22. With respect to the possibility of establishing schools for all religions and classes, I understand this to mean a uniform system of primary schools throughout the Empire. In this country, the focus or original seat of each of the great religions, Mahometan, Jewish, and Christian, each sect is sharpened into hostility against its neighbours. The Roman Catholics are willing to contribute liberally to education on their principles. The Jews educate themselves. The Greeks have a good college. All have day-schools (of late years), but all give a large predominance to teaching of mere forms of religion according to their respective systems.

A national system of comprehensive instruction in European subjects, equal to the times we live in, would, I am sure, be refused by each of the sects separately, for each would dislike it, and each would declare truly that it is already carrying on day-schools. But a national system, carried on in the name of the Government and by Government teachers, might find abundant pupils from all indiscriminately, with or without the consent of ecclesiastical rulers; and in case of refusal, the latter would not only fail in controlling their people, but would incur the reproach of opposing progress and the laws of their national Sovereign.

Education is, in itself, a thing ardently desired by all classes. As for the effects to be produced by a system of national primary schools, there would be, besides the diffusion of reading and writing, a good substitution of useful worldly knowledge for forms of worship, and the promotion of friendly schoolboy friendships among all classes to turn to account in after-life.

In a religious sense, I should apprehend a general weakening of religious distinctions, and a tendency to the belief that Christ and Mahomet were remarkable worthies, each yielding the *pas* to the other alternately, for complinent's sake; but it may be hoped that the religious teachers would redouble their efforts for the correction of this tendency out of school-hours.

There is a deplorable state of ignorance prevailing among all classes of the population, even in common everyday subjects, which is the more to be regretted when we remember the high standing which early Arabs attained in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and the cultivation of their noble language.

A first-rate Government College in Jerusalem, Beyrout, Damascus, and Aleppo, for instruction, even in the highest branches of knowledge, and for conferring degrees of honour for learning, would be of inestimable benefit. I should expect great results in ameliorating the social position of Christians, without exciting Moslem jealousy from the bestowal of honours in reward for learning.

23. I should strongly deprecate the idea of appointing a Christian Vice-Governor by the side of the Turkish Governor, even where a great part of the population is Christian.

Such a measure would open endless means of intrigue from the high ecclesiastical authorities, these being also urged on, and all their measures dictated, by foreign Powers.

24. We hear little in the South of Palestine of foreign agency in producing division and discontent, yet I believe that we are infested by Russian spies of every class in society; and the Mussulmans are universally of opinion that danger is to be apprehended from the French. Apparent instances are not, however, common.

25. The matter of passports is generally well looked after in this country. The Americans are the most lax in affording protection here in Jerusalem; but I have not heard of the Turkish authorities having cause to complain of abuses in this matter.

Jerusalem, July 17, 1860.

No. 6.

Consul C. Blunt to Lord J. Russell.—(Received August 6.)

(No. 51.)

My Lord, *Smyrna, July 28, 1860.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship inclosed the copy of a despatch which I have this day addressed to his Excellency Sir Henry L. Bulwer, G.C.B., containing replies to a series of questions relating principally to the state of the Christians within the jurisdiction of this Consulate.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES BLUNT.

Inclosure 1 in No. 6.

Consul C. Blunt to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Smyrna, July 28, 1860.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Excellency inclosed, my replies to the printed series of questions contained in your circular despatch of the 11th of June last, and have at the same time to beg your indulgent consideration of the delay in their transmission which has been occasioned by indisposition and my having been confined to my room for the last three weeks.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES BLUNT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 6.

Answers to Queries.

1. NOTWITHSTANDING the very imperfect and faulty system of administration, the onerous abuses in the collection, by the farmers, of the tithes, the general condition of the province is daily improving; an improvement, however, which is more generally to the advantage of the Christian races, who are, if I may be excused the expression, buying up the Turks.

The general improvement commenced with the reforms introduced by the Gulhané Hatti-Sherif, previous to which the large Turkish proprietors in the interior lived by a system of oppression and plunder, which was put a stop to by the Hatt. The Christians then came forward as cultivators; their numbers increased by new-comers, for their lives were no longer at the mercy of every petty authority; the Turkish proprietors began to fall off; population visibly decreased: their lands were no longer profitable. All Turkish proprietors have to furnish their quota for the conscription, and many, very many, of the descendants of formerly large landed proprietors, after serving their time with the army, return home to find the whole feature of their native place changed: the predominant Turkish population replaced by Christians; their heritage uncultivated lands; and they themselves, without either the means or taste for the avocations of their youth, and to which they were accustomed previously to their entering the army; and if, by chance, any of them desire to resume their former agricultural pursuits, they usually fall into the meshes of some Christian usurious banker, to whom the whole property or estate is soon sacrificed. They who return without any taste for their old pursuits, dispose of their property for what they can get, and the purchasers are either Armenians or Greeks. Several estates, under these circumstances, have been purchased by Franks. Amongst the latter there are seven British subjects, who have purchased large farms in the interior, and are cultivating them with success. In the more immediate vicinity of Smyrna, very few Turkish landed proprietors remain; and at the principal villages where the Frank and Christian population resort during summer, nearly all the Turkish proprietors have disposed of their property.

The result of this change is a very extensive increase in the amount of the productions of the country.

With respect to the moral state of the province, it may with safety be

asserted that there is less crime than is heard of in provinces of the same extension, in more civilized countries where an effective state of police is kept up, and this is the more extraordinary when the police system is so very defective, where there are so many religious sects, where fanaticism is so prevalent amongst all classes, and the population generally armed, although they are not allowed to wear them in the towns.

2. In 1830 the Turkish population of Smyrna was 80,000; it is now estimated at 41,000

In 1830 the Greek population in Smyrna was 20,000; it is now 75,000

Armenians	6,000
Jews	12,500
Latin Rayahs	3,700
Foreign subjects	19,000
(The authorities assert that the population of Smyrna is one-third male and two-thirds female.)	
Districts belonging more immediately to Smyrna .. (Said to be two-thirds Mussulman and one-third Greeks.)	170,000
Province of Aidin.. .. .. (Town of Aidin 30,000)	280,000
Denislie and dependencies	50,000
Mentasha and dependencies..	75,000
Magnesia and dependencies..	150,000
Migratory population, Yourouks, Gipseys, and Zeibecks ..	110,000
Total	991,700

It may be observed in reference to this question, that rapid as the increase is of the Christian population, the decrease of the Turkish is in a greater ratio. Visit any town or village where there is a mixed Mussulman and Christian population: in the Turkish quarter no one is visible, no children in the streets; whereas in the Christian the streets are full of children. The decrease in the Mussulman population is attributed to various causes; but it may be asserted that, after the continual drain upon the male population for troops, that which more sensibly checks the increase of population is the horrid system so generally practised among the Mussulmans of causing abortion, which they do not consider as criminal: midwives—women of the country, frequently Jewesses—are specially employed for the purpose. The shocking prevalence of unnatural crime amongst the Mussulmans is another cause for the decrease of population, which has a two-fold pernicious effect, for the public baths are too generally the resort for these iniquities.

3. Although it is stated in Reply No. 1, that the Turks are daily disposing of their lands to Christians in the interior, they still form the bulk of landed proprietors, but their lands are for the most part cultivated by the Christians.

The great majority of persons engaged in trade in the towns are Christians.

4. There is no difference whatever. Both Turk and Christian are upon a footing of perfect equality.

5. There is no difference whatever. Both Turk and Christian are upon a footing of perfect equality.

6. It may with safety be asserted that the Christians are much better off than the Turks; for there is no drain upon the Christian population for troops, and the Mussulman and Christian pay the same taxes on their produce.

The Turkish villager is, without doubt, more frequently subject to oppression than the Christian.

If a Christian is oppressed by the minor Ottoman authorities in the interior, and the case is of a serious nature, he will always find the means of bringing the case to the attention of some Consular authority (now more frequently to the Russian than formerly), through whose medium it would be represented to the Vizier, or presiding Pasha of the district, which the minor Turkish official is fully aware of; and it is the fear of such interference which more or less protects the Christians, with the exception, however, of instances which often occur, when the Turkish official is supported by the Christian primates, for the

latter are ever ready to avail themselves of Ottoman interference, however unjust, against their Christian brethren, when it suits their interests.

But the poor Turk, to whom can he appeal? Supposing he finds the means of obtaining Consular interference, the superintending Ottoman official, although he will promise, he will as certainly deny the the supplicant redress for having appealed to Christian interference in his behalf!

A further preponderant influence in favour of the Christian is that, if not all, the great majority, of the farmers of the tithes are Christians who commit incredible abuses in their mode of exacting the tithe on produce. It cannot be asserted that the collector is more mercifully disposed towards the Christian than the Mussulman, but he is less fearful of exposure when imposing on the Turkish proprietor: the latter, therefore, is the greater sufferer.

7. Generally speaking, from all that I can learn, Christian evidence is not admitted against Mussulmans in the interior, but only one instance has been brought before me, which was in 1857, when the authorities at Aidin would not admit Christian evidence in a suit in which a British subject was interested. On that occasion, in conjunction with the Pasha of Smyrna, officers were sent from the Governor and this Consulate to Aidin, when upon their united interference Christian evidence was, and has since been, admitted in the Courts of Aidin. Christian evidence is admitted in the Courts at Smyrna, but in all suits relating to houses and landed property, foreign Christian evidence is not admitted against the native Christian.

8. It is a well-known fact, which no person of experience in the country would or could venture to dispute, that since the destruction of the Janissaries in 1826, from which period may be dated the more rapid decline of Turkish power, and the subsequent publication of the Gulhané Hatti-sherif, there has been an evident daily improvement in the state of the Christians. I first came to Turkey in 1820; consequently an experience of forty years enables me to express opinions founded on constant personal observation, and therefore fearlessly state that the Christian population, in this part of Turkey particularly, is not only better off, and more considered, than they were five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years ago, but that they feel and know they are so, and they also feel their increasing influence, without using the word "power," for the alarm evinced by the Turks makes them the more conscious of it, and the lower orders never lose the opportunity of showing it. On two occasions since my arrival in 1857, the lower orders of Christians of the Greek Church have disarmed some of the military guard sent to keep order during the performance of their Easter ceremonies.

9. I know of no inequalities dependent on religion. It does occasionally occur that some old fanatical Turk will call a Christian a Giaour; but generally speaking, in the towns the term is never used, but in the villages it is still used, not only by the Turks, but by the Christians, who from habit will say, "Our Giaours." I have heard the same expression used by Greek priests when addressing a Turk.

In all documents written by the authorities, the term Christian is now used. Formerly, in official letters or papers the Turks, in referring to a Christian, either dead or murdered, they would use the term "murdé;" meaning, "died like a dog." But they now use the term "ulmush," "died, or dead;" the same as they would when referring to a Mahometan.

In the Councils the Christian members are generally termed Aghas, and always treated with the same respect as the other members. If pipes and coffee are introduced, the Christians are served the same as Turks.

10. Most decidedly not, and it is more to their advantage to pay the exemption tax.

11. None whatever, as respects building churches; and in the performance of their religious ceremonies the Turkish authorities are ever ready to lend their assistance to keep order, and prevent any indecent interruption of the ceremonies.

12. As I interpret the bearing of the question, no case of oppression, of any glaring nature, has come to my knowledge since my arrival in Smyrna in 1857. It would, at the same time, be advancing too much to assert that no cases have occurred in the interior, at places where there are poorly paid minor Turkish authorities.

13. Protestant Ottoman subjects are under the special protection of the

Turkish authorities, which is exercised to protect them against the fanatical enmity of other Christian sects, and Jews.

14. Generally speaking, the Christian population have far more reason to complain of grievances emanating from their own clergy and primates than from the Turks. The Christians are not so numerous in Asia Minor as they are in Roumelia, where the evil is more general, and weighs more heavily on the Christian populations.

15. Christians are admitted into all the local Councils; in fact, in the interior, at places where there is a predominant Christian population, everything is in their hands. The Mudir is the mere tool of the primates, well knowing that if he does not submit himself to their will, a united complaint to the presiding Governor will occasion his dismissal.

It often occurs that there is a disunion amongst the primates respecting a Mudir, one party for, and the other against, him. The case is referred to the presiding Governor, when the weight of gold decides the question, and the amount of the bribe is charged proportionally by the primates to their Christian brethren.

Under such a system, it may with safety be stated that the Christian members of the local Councils are quite as opposed to reform as the Turkish officials.

16. The question is in some sense answered by the preceding reply; but it may be observed, in reference to the general bearing of these questions, if it is policy of the day to maintain, or rather strengthen, the influence of the Christians in the country, the present should not be disturbed; but if not, the local Councils (which are the most corrupt tribunals in the country) should be abolished, and all suits and differences which now come within its attributes be referred to the presiding Pasha, or Governor of the district.

17. If only Turkish element can be availed of, my most decided opinion is, that no good would be derived by creating separate tribunals; for, according to the present state of things in Turkey, whether considered with a view to its intellectual or moral state, by augmenting the number of tribunals you spread more widely the means of corruption—or, in other words, you would enrich an increased number of Ottoman officials, to the detriment of the interests of the people.

18. Most decidedly not—that is, generally speaking. There are occasionally Turkish fanatics who consider it a merit to procure a convert for the Bairam festivals, and they get a convert from a class of individuals who will stoop to the ignominy of a temporary conversion, either for money or other worldly causes.

I know of no instance of conversion by compulsion since I have been in Smyrna, neither can I learn of any having taken place previous to my arrival.

19. Cases of female conversion are only amongst the lower orders, and, in the towns, very rare; but the instances of female conversion are more frequent than male in the interior, where, as in Roumelia, but particularly in Bulgaria, the origin or cause may be traced to the indiscretion of the Christian parents. It very often occurs that a young Turk becomes intimate with a Christian family, which the parents rather cultivate than reject, upon the plea or idea that their intimacy with him will protect them against other more evil-disposed Mahometans; the very natural result is, that the young Turk falls in love with the daughter of the indiscreet parents, his addresses are received, a secret courtship is carried on, till the young Christian female, either to hide her shame or for affection, goes off with her lover and declares herself a Mahometan.

It is an undeniable fact that such is the origin of the more frequent instances of female conversion in Bulgaria, and I am more than convinced that female conversion in Asia Minor arises from the same causes.

20. In a country where corruption is inherent to all classes, whether Turk or Christian, it is difficult how to suggest any system which could be carried, bearing in mind how far the ramifications extend, with any hope or prospect of counteracting so predominant an evil.

It may be surmised that, by appointing officers to be specially sent and salaried by the Porte, the evil might be checked; but long experience has taught me that the Ottoman official, however apparently sincere his professions previous to his departure from the capital, is a very different person when invested with power in the interior.

21. Previously to suggesting any measures, it is most undoubtedly, under

existing circumstances, a question of very serious import whether, by attempting a re-organization, and consequently disturbing the present state of things, any beneficial results could be obtained. My foregoing replies have shown that, when human life and property were secure, the state of the Christian races began to improve simultaneously, it may be said, with agriculture and commerce. The more than richness of the soil, and the well-known superior intelligence of the Christian over the Mahometan races, mainly contributed to that improvement; therefore the now daily-increasing means of instruction, so largely availed of by the Christians, but unheeded by the Turks; the facility of communication with more civilized nations by steam, and the introduction of railways, will probably do more for the general good of the country, even under the present faulty system, than the introduction of new measures which the Turks cannot or will not understand, and I may add, having neither the desire nor capacity for carrying out.

In making the latter remarks, however strong they may appear, I shall venture to add, for my justification, that, with a people with whom the idea of patriotism is wanting; people in whose characters apathy and procrastination are predominant; people whose ideas are, in the extreme sense of the words, selfish and sensual; people whose existing social and moral evils add to the daily-increasing degradation of the country: with such sorry elements to work with, the introduction of new measures might probably tend to disturb the present steadily-progressing intelligence and prosperity of the country.

22. In Smyrna, and in all the principal towns and villages, there are schools both for the Turks and Christians. In those for the Turks, generally speaking, instruction is confined entirely to the Koran. For the Christians, instruction is general.

The establishment of schools for all religions and classes, if the project could be carried out, which I hold to be doubtful, would always have a predominant influence in favour of the Christians, amongst whom, with both sexes, there is an increasing desire for instruction, which does not, generally speaking, exist with the Turks.

All facilities of instruction which the Christians can avail themselves of will, most decidedly, increase the weight of their influence in the country.

23. It might very probably be a most dangerous experiment; and, on the other hand, I do not see that any advantage would be derived from such an appointment. There would be a continual clash of feelings and sentiments. The one would hold to his Koran, and the other to his fanaticism; and in every case of reference to the Porte the deciding vote would be in favour of the Turk, except in some glaring instance, when such a decision might be taken up by some representative of a Western Power.

24. The only instances that I have heard of were in 1854, when an individual named Pittaco was sent to Smyrna, hoping to induce the Greeks to go and join the Hellenic invasion of Thessaly; and in May or June 1859, when it was said that a Greek Priest had come from Odessa to lead his co-religionists to believe in the regeneration of the Grecian Empire under the Grand Duke Constantine, an assertion which had some weight with the lower orders, till they learned that the Grand Duke had left Smyrna without bestowing anything on the poor.

25. Most undoubtedly, the subjects of the Porte will always obtain foreign passports whenever they can.

There is a greater facility in obtaining Russian and Greek passports than any other.

I have not heard of any instances of Greek passports being exchanged for Russian.

(Signed) CHARLES BLUNT, *Consul.*

No. 7.

Sir H. Bulwer to Lord J. Russell.—(Received August 17.)

(No. 470.)

My Lord, *Therapia, July 31, 1860.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith, a copy of the replies to the Queries addressed by me to Her Majesty's Consuls in June last, which Mr. Blunt has requested me to forward to your Lordship.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. L. BULWER.

Inclosure in No. 7.

Answers to Queries by Consul J. E. Blunt.

1. MORE than two-thirds of the population of Uscup are engaged in agriculture. Improvement is perceivable in this source of industry.

In the space of ten years from 1850 to 1860 the value of the tithes has more than doubled, and in the same ratio the prices of every other commodity has increased.

This state has also given an impetus to trade, and notwithstanding the absence of good roads, communication between the districts and contiguous provinces has been more regular and connected.

For a long time the province has been a prey to brigandage: this evil originating from a mountain population unsubdued, and eminently warlike and mercenary, has more sway in the plains. But it may be said that its development has been rather arrested than promoted; Christian churches and monasteries, towns and inhabitants, are not now pillaged, massacred, and burnt by Albanian hordes as used to be done ten years ago.

On the whole the Undersigned can say, without fear of contradiction, that the province of Uscup is in that happy state of transition from bad to good, perhaps slow in its operation, but on that account not the less sure in its effects.

2. Mussulman element prevails as almost two to one over the Christian. By the Registrar's account, it appears that there are 340,000 Mussulman, and 207,000 Christian inhabitants in the province of Uscup.

3. The great bulk of proprietors in the country are Mussulmans, and the majority of persons engaged in trade in the towns Christians.

4. Christian subjects of the Porte can hold landed property on equal conditions with the Turks.

5. They can.

6. In some, in many respects, they are as well if not better off.

In general the Christian villages are situated in the plains, while the Mussulmans occupy the mountains.

The difference of this position in a country where there are no good roads is of great advantage to the former.

In viewing the relative conditions of the two elements, it is not difficult to perceive that the military service, from which the Christians are exempted, has done much harm to the Turks, the peasantry in particular. The conscription has committed great ravages amongst them. Indeed, for the last ten years recruits have been drawn from all classes to fill the ranks, not only of the line, but of the Rediff, the police, and Bashi-Bozouk corps as well. Whilst in every town shops and houses are neglected, in the country fields remain uncultivated, and families in wretched misery.

A Christian village is in general better formed and cleaner, its yards more stocked, and its inhabitants better clothed than the Turkish.

During a holiday the state of prosperity of the Christians is seen in relief. It is indeed a rare exception to see a Bulgarian woman or girl who has not an embroidered shirt and apron, a string of gold or silver coins, on her person.

But the Christian peasants also labour under certain disadvantages, from which the Turks in comparison suffer little or not at all.

1st. They are not allowed to carry arms. This, considering the want of a good police, exposes them the more to attacks from brigands.

2ndly. The system of farming most of the taxes is as prejudicial to their interests as it is to the Imperial Treasury, owing to the very oppressive exactions it fosters.

3rdly. The conduct of the police and the Medjlis messengers is always a subject of complaint.

4thly. The exactions of the Greek clergy and the primates of the towns fall almost entirely on the peasantry.

On the whole, the conduct of this body is arbitrary, and very frequently cruel. Corporal punishment and confinement in irons are availed of by it in the exercise of Church discipline over its flock.

7. Christian evidence in law-suits between a Mussulman and a non-Mussulman is not admitted in the Local Courts.

In such cases in which the parties are not Mussulman, Christian evidence is admitted.

About seventeen months ago a Turkish soldier murdered a Mahometan, an old man, who was working in his field. The only persons, two in number, who witnessed the deed are Christians. The Medjlis of Uscup would not take their evidence, although the Undersigned urged the Kaimakam to accept it.

About the same time a Zaptieh tried by force to convert a Bulgarian girl to Islamism. As she declared before the Medjlis of Camanova that she would not abjure her religion, he killed her in the very precincts of the Mudir's house. This tragedy created great sensation in the province. The Medjlises of Camanova and Prisrend would not accept Christian evidence, and every effort was made to save the Zaptieh; but on the case being referred to Constantinople, an order reached the authorities to "take the evidence of all persons who witnessed the murder." This was done, and Kiani Pasha, who at the time took charge of the province, where he has done much good, immediately had the Zaptieh beheaded.

Six months ago a Bulgarian in the district of Camanova was attacked, without provocation on his part, by two Albanians. They wounded him severely; on the case being referred to Prisrend, the Medjlis refused to take cognizance of it, as the only evidence produced was Christian.

8. Decidedly it is: while everywhere there are signs that the Turks, more especially the higher classes, are losing ground in population, agriculture, and trade, the opposite is the case with the Christians.

In nearly all the towns, streets—entire quarters—have passed into the hands of the Christians.

"Djeremeh" fine, the very worst feature of Eastern oppression, and which was much practised twenty and fifteen years ago, has been removed by the Tanzimat.

Ten years ago torture was very frequently adopted by the authorities, but is no longer resorted to. Churches were not allowed to be built; and one can judge of the measure of Turkish toleration practised at that time by having had to creep under doors scarcely four feet high. It was an offence to smoke and ride before a Turk; to cross his path, or not stand up before him, was equally wrong.

During the last five years, that is, since the war with Russia, more substantial signs of improvement have been seen: the construction of houses, one of the surest signs of prosperity, has been carried on actively by the Christians in the towns. The prices of labour and materials have also increased, and the houses are more costly, better made, and more comfortably furnished.

9. Christian evidence, as stated in reply to question No. 7, is not respected by the Medjlises.

The uncivil conduct and contemptuous conduct of the Mudirs and members of Medjlises towards the Christians, appears to be viewed by the latter as arising from the difference of religion.

The degrading terms of "kiaffir" and "giaour," addressed to them by their authorities, offends their feelings and excites their hatred.

10. It is the impression of the Undersigned that the Christians, the peasantry, which forms the bulk of their population, would prefer to enter the military service than pay the commutation-tax. It is only the clergy and the town population, which on the whole are very well off, that are opposed to this [illegible]

The Christians would gain more by serving the army than by paying the tax.

11. Not now. Before the late war, they used to encounter difficulties in this respect, chiefly on the part of the Mussulman population, but rarely on that of the superior authorities. The orders of the Porte have done much to remove these difficulties; and perhaps in no other country are the subjected classes allowed to celebrate their religious observances with that degree of pomp and ostentation that is practised by them in Turkey.

12. It is not so much fanaticism that prevails amongst the Mussulmans, as the jealousy that is excited in them by the impression, which is gaining force every day, that they are retrograding to the advantage of the Christians.

This feeling has acquired influence in the subordinate Medjlises; and when any case of oppression takes place on the part of the population, these Courts are disposed to assist in it.

13. There are no Protestant subjects of the Porte in the province of Uscup.

14. The clergy and primates are as much to blame in this respect as the subordinate authorities (Mudirs and Medjlises). The principal oppressions under which the peasants labour arise from the system of farming the taxes; and it may be said that in six cases out of ten the Christian merchants and the Teharbadjies, and very often the clergy, avail themselves of it unsparingly.

15. Christians are admitted, but generally as a mere matter of form. They are not allowed to take a prominent part in public affairs, and are treated disrespectfully. On the whole, these Councils are far more opposed to reform and good government than the officials of the Porte.

Generally speaking, these officials are disposed to act well, but their action is counteracted by the power and manœuvres of the Medjlises.

16. These Councils are not properly organized; they do not include the best, the most respectable, elements of the population; and they exercise too much power.

Governors should be clothed with more power and responsibility; more of the Christian element should be infused into the Medjlises. Their judicial functions ought to be curtailed, and their immediate interference with the Executive arrested.

This interference is now exercised with impunity; and by the system of "Mazbatas," which gives a legal colouring to their action, these Medjlises have gradually undermined, and at last usurped, the power of the Executive without incurring its responsibilities.

17. They should be allowed to take a limited cognizance of Civil suits; but not to interfere in such cases that more properly belong to the jurisdiction of a commercial tribunal. All criminal cases ought to be tried by a separate Court.

The establishment of commercial and criminal tribunals in every Eyalet and Sandjak is highly desirable, and cannot fail to do much good to trade and society. They ought to include an equal number of Turkish and Christian members; the President to be a Turk. He should be appointed and paid by the Porte, and ought to possess the knowledge of one foreign language.

18. They perhaps feel, but do not evince, a very strong desire to make converts; and since the Undersigned has been in the province of Uscup, there have not been many cases of conversion in which compulsion has been used.

A few months ago, in the district of Kotchana, a Zaptieh forcibly took a Bulgarian girl from her home for the purpose of conversion. The Mudir and Medjlis of that place were disposed to favour this act. The Undersigned then placed the facts before the Kaimakam of Uscup, who caused the girl to be returned to her parents, but did not punish the Zaptieh, although it was established that he had used force. Again, in the case of the girl of Camanova, who was killed by a Zaptieh, force had been previously used by him to convert her to his religion.

A Bey of Uscup forcibly kept in his house a Christian orphan, whose parents had died as labourers in his service. As the Bey wanted to convert the boy, the latter took refuge in the Consulate. The Governor-General, on being informed of the merits of the case, ordered the authorities of Uscup not to allow the boy to be molested, and to reprimand the Bey.

19. On the part of the Turks, from both, but not so with the Christians; with them it is more under the influence of worldly causes.

The Turks employ Christians, principally females, as servants; and the number of these has increased since the importation of Arab slaves has been arrested. When these servants first enter the service of the Turks, they are very young, often mere children, and are chiefly recruited from the indigent classes. The fact is, the parents, who cannot afford to support the young and useless members of their family, dispose of them when they can for a sum of money, paid to them in advance, at the rate of twenty, thirty, or forty piastres per annum for a period of three, five, or seven years. The arrangements once concluded, the Turk takes charge of the girl; and as the parents will not or cannot look after her, she is brought up, as regards manners and religion, like the other members of the family to which she is apprenticed.

It very frequently happens that, at the expiration of service-term, the master does not want to give her up; and tries by every means in his power—now by promises of matrimony and gifts, and then by threats—to draw her from her religion. If she feels that she can better her condition by abjuring a religion of which she knows little, and has been taught to care less, she succumbs under such pressure. It is then that the matter is taken up by the Christian community; a hue-and-cry is raised by the clergy and primates against the Turks, and every effort is made to save her; and they generally succeed through the same process of persuasion used by the opposite party.

20. The establishment of separate Courts in every Eyalet and Sandjak for civil, commercial, and criminal suits; and the introduction of trial by jury, in a country where the groundwork of the municipal system already exists, may promote these objects.

21. (1.) The improvements of the administration by centralizing power and responsibility;

(2.) The organization of a good service of police, to be connected with the military;

(3.) The suppression of the system of farming the taxes;

(4.) The distribution of the "virgin"-property tax more equally between the higher and lower classes;

(5.) The Greek Church and its property ought to be controlled:

And, lastly, agriculture and commerce ought to be stimulated by facilitating communication, and establishing banks in the principal provinces.

22. Their establishment cannot but be favourably viewed by the inhabitants, for there surely is a tendency among them, particularly the Bulgarians, for an extension of intellectual cultivation. If such schools are controlled by Government, and not allowed to pass under the direction of Russian teachers, they would then contribute in an eminent degree to the prosperity and tranquillity of the country.

23. It would be better if the Financial Departments in the provinces were confided to Christian officials appointed by the Porte, with the rank, privileges, and responsibility the present Defterdars and Muhasabidjies have.

The revenue would be far better conducted by them; and if allowed to act as Vice-Presidents in the Councils, and the power to correspond with the Porte, they would then perform the duties without holding the rank of Vice-Governors.

24. In Roumelia, foreign emissaries swarm, principally Russians, Servians, and Austrians; the former generally practise in Bulgaria, and the latter in North Albania. The one preaches Panslavism, and the other Slavism. Both parties are very actively occupied in producing discontent amongst the different classes.

Austria generally employs pensioned military officers; and, through the influence of the Roman Catholic clergy, over which she exercises great control, insinuates them as teachers in the native schools. In Prisrend, Ipek, Yeni-Bazaar, and Pristina, the schools are under the direction of such teachers.

The one now at Pristina was a lieutenant in the Imperial Engineer corps, and, as such, continues to receive his pension.

There is every probability these teachers are paid from without, as they receive but a poor pittance from the natives.

During the last six months an Austrian emissary, a native of Pesth (Mr. Neshkovich), formerly teacher in Kinpruli (Velessa), a town in the Province of Monastir, has been actively at work in North Albania, now assuming the title of Consul and then that of Priest, and interfering as such in local affairs.

The Military Pasha caused him to be watched, and, finally, desired him to leave the country. He refused to do so, on the strength of a firman in his possession, directing the Ottoman authorities to permit him to travel in the province.

The action of the Austrian emissaries also extends to the Mahometan Albanians, and appears to be directed with some success.

During the late disturbances at Ipek—a district that includes many Latin families and several priests—the emissary Neshkovich was there. Amongst the promoters of these disturbances there were three Latins; they were arrested and conducted with the other prisoners to Prisrend. Neshkovich, who sometime before had obtained the liberation of another person (Latin) who was arrested by the local authorities on suspicion of being an emissary, immediately proceeded to that place. Shortly after the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Prisrend came to Pristina and tried to act in favour of the three Latin prisoners.

It is only four or five days ago that this emissary came to Pristina and introduced himself to the Undersigned, as well as to other persons, as Austrian Consul. The Mushir Pasha has not recognized him as such, and continues to watch his movements.

The political education of the Christian population in Bulgaria is formed by Russian teachers, who are under the immediate direction of Mr. Naidin Geroff, the Russian Consul at Philippopolis.

This person is a Bulgarian. He received his education in Russia; then returned to his country, where, before he received his present office, he acted as teacher for several years.

It is through this person that his former colleagues in Ternova, Kasan, Kizanlik, Eski-Zahra, Gabrovo, Shinno, Yanboli, Nish, Sofia, Samakoff, Kustendil, Istip, Uscup, Kania, and Kinpruli, receive the *mot d'ordre* and the gifts sent by Russia to the religious establishments in those places.

Within the last twelve months these gifts have considerably increased in number and value; and, in some cases, Russian officials have been employed to convey them to their destination. For instance, a Mr. Sishkin, an officer of the Russian Consulate-General at Bucharest, and a clerk of the same office at Belgrade, have been distributing church-furniture and large sums of money to the principal towns in Bulgaria; and costly gifts have been sent to the church and monasteries of Uscup by Mr. Naidin Geroff, through his Agent the teacher there.

Three years ago a Mr. Jordan, a native of Kinpruli, and a subject of the Sultan, acted as teacher at Uscup. In his secret capacity of Panslavist Agent, he created disturbances at that place. When the Porte ordered the authorities to dismiss him, several Russian Consuls and a Mr. Alexandros Efxharhos (one of the principal members of the Bulgarian Committee at Constantinople) took his case up, and addressed very severe letters to the Governor and Greek Archbishop of Uscup, conveying in them protests against his dismissial.

These documents ought to exist in the local archives.

This teacher was ultimately turned out, but was soon after employed, in the same capacity, in the school at Perlepe. He it is that recently caused trouble between the Greek Archbishop and the Christian community in that district.

25. There are very few subjects of the Sultan, natives of the Province of Uscup, that possess foreign passports.

In most cases Greek passports are first obtained, and subsequently exchanged for Russian passports.

Pristina, July 14, 1860.

(Signed) J. E. BLUNT.

No. 8.

Consul Cathcart to Lord J. Russell.—(*Received August* 18.)

My Lord, *Prevesa, August* 8, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of my replies to a series of Queries recently addressed to me, on the state of this province, &c., &c., by Sir Henry Bulwer.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. CATHCART.

Inclosure 1 in No. 8.

Consul Cathcart to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Prevesa, July* 20, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith replies to the series of Queries addressed to me by your Excellency, and inclosed in the circular despatch dated the 11th ultimo.

I trust that your Excellency will extend your indulgence to me when perusing these answers, as I have not had a lengthened experience of this jurisdiction; but I have visited most parts of Turkey, and in considering the important questions you have done me the honour to transmit, I have endeavoured in my replies to embody all the information I could possibly obtain from personal observation and other sources.

From all I have seen or heard of the complaints of the Christians of this province, I am bound to say that I believe no real oppression, systematically carried on, exists. There are crimes, as in all countries, and, from the maladministration of officials, whether Christians or Turks, culprits often escape punishment; but that the Sultan's Government deliberately apply themselves, on all occasions, to obstruct justice, and to harass and maltreat the Christians, I deny.

One of the great evils which all Turkish officials have to contend with, is the private influence brought to bear upon them; and the Consular interferences are more irritiating and more galling to their pride than perhaps any others, being more difficult to resist, and so frequently occurring from a love of influence and a vanity of official meddling in what frequently does not concern them in any way; and the lower in rank the Agent, the more disagreeable he usually makes himself to the authorities, who are often thereby indisposed to proceed quickly in questions in which they would otherwise come to a decision at once.

It occurs, no doubt, that personal friendship or money-bribes occasionally stand in the way of a fair administration of justice, but a reorganization of the tribunals (Medjlis), as recommended, will assist to purge this evil. That the Edict of Gulhané and the Hatti-humayoun have gradually improved the whole state of the province requires no demonstration. They have given the Christians their present position, who, instead of being trodden down as they were twenty years (or less) ago, now are almost secure from molestation and loudly assert their rights: but, not having abated a particle of their old antipathy to the Ottoman Government, they magnify everything in the shape of restraint, and any quarrel or disputed question with a Turk (if decided against them) is termed an "oppression;" while their own conduct, as far as my experience goes, shows them to be often capable of the very crimes they impute to the Turks, who, I think, stand far higher in honesty and general morality than the majority of the accusers.

I believe it will be found that the complaints which are to be presented to the Vizier in this province will bear quite as much on the rapacity and tyranny of the Greek clergy as on any Turkish oppression; and I understand that the higher class of Christians intend to confine themselves to demanding the full execution of the Hatti-humayoun, not being able to bring forward many specific charges against officials.

In obedience to your Excellency's instructions, I have dispatched a copy of my replies to the Foreign Office.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. CATHCART.

Inclosure 2 in No. 8.

Answers to Queries.

1. IN replying to this question it is necessary to commence by a sketch of the province of Albania, over the whole of which this jurisdiction extends. Albania may be divided into two grand divisions. The first, Epirus, is composed of the districts of Janina, Conitza, Paleopopogani, Argyrocastro, Delvino, Paramythia, Margariti, Limpouria, and Avlona; the second, or

Albania-Illyria, comprehends the districts of Berat, El Bassan, Ochrida, Upper and Lower Dibra, Tiranna, Candia, Durazzo, Croia, Lessio, Scutari, Dulcigno, and Podgorizza. The boundaries are Servia and Bosnia on the north, the Ionian Sea on the west, the Gulf of Arta and Greece on the south, and Macedonia and Thessaly on the east. Nearly the whole of the country is one mass of intricate ranges of mountains, rising to great heights, the greatest elevation being the Pindus. The only considerable plains are those of Fanari, Arta, and Mousakià, but there are higher table-lands like that of Janina, and a great number of valleys of great richness of soil intersect the whole country.

The coast of Albania presents few really good ports, although there are many good anchorages for small craft. Prevesa, at the opening of the Gulf of Arta, although very safe, does not admit vessels drawing more than 12 feet. Avlona is a fine bay, but with little trade. Durazzo, which has a considerable commerce, is very unsafe, and Antivari is an open roadstead. The chief rivers are the Bojana and Drin, both in the north, the former of which is a broad and rapid shallow stream, but is navigable by small craft close up to the Scutari. Most of the rivers in the south are merely mountain torrents, which, in summer, are greatly diminished in volume, and none of them can be said to offer any facilities for navigation.

At present the province consists of two Pashalics, that of Janina, formed by the districts of Delvino and Berat, and that of Scutari, which is again under the orders of the Provincial Government of Monastir. Every description of climate made be found in these regions, and the productions are, in consequence, most varied in their kind. Almost all the resources are agricultural, and, by an improved system, might be enormously increased. In classic days a large population filled Epirus and the adjacent countries, but now vast tracts of land and rich plains close to the sea, such as Nicopolis and others more inland (like Mousakià), instead of growing corn, are devoted to feeding horses and sheep, and used as pasturages by the nomadic shepherds, of Wallachian descent, who retire to the ranges of the Pindus during the summer heats, and only return towards the coast at the approach of winter. There is only one crop yearly, as in temperate climates. Barley, oats, and rye, are cut in June; wheat in July; rice in September; and maize in October, or even later; besides these, an immense crop of olives, which in many parts, particularly Arta and Prevesa, are carefully cultivated, is annually produced. A great quantity of valonia (gall-nut) is gathered from the oak forests. Rice is grown in the valley of Fanari, and fruits of all kinds are found in various localities. Oranges and lemons are grown in great perfection and abundance, and form an article of trade. An immense number of sheep and cattle are sent to the Ionian Islands, and wool is also one of the objects of export. Horses are bred in large numbers, as all transport whatever is performed by them.

There are few manufactures, with the exception of a very busy trade in arms, which are in constant demand, and some gold ornaments, and gold and silver lace, heavy capotes, tanned leather for sandals, and, in the north, the silk cultivation; everything else is imported from abroad, principally from Trieste and from the bonded warehouses of the Ionian Islands, to which also most of the exports are directed.

The population of the province is extremely diversified in race. Epirus Proper is chiefly inhabited by people of a Greek descent; the Albanians are found in tribes, viz., the Tosks, Lapes, and Tchames, and innumerable off-shoots, principally along the coast mountains, and scattered among the Hellenic populations all the way down to the Greek frontier from Berat.

The populations of Northern Albania are termed Ghegues; they are a brave, fanatical race, inured to war from the constant raids of the Montenegrins, and under very little control, at least those in the borders and around Scutari, where they far outnumber the Christians. They are chiefly, like all the Albanians, of an Illyrian stock, mixed slightly with the Turks, and they speak an Illyrian dialect. It would be impossible, within the limits of this paper, to give an idea of the mixture of races; suffice it to say, that within the province are Greeks, Albanians, Illyrians, Wallachians, Turks, Jews, and Zingaris. The Albanians are divided into Christians, and Mussulman tribes and families, and throughout the whole country feudalism still prevails, if not by law, *de facto*; and, in some districts, there are families who are looked to as the heads of the

clans, so to term them, and who could rally, on occasions, large bodies of armed men. Almost all the Irregulars (the Arnaouts) are furnished by this province, and are recruited, principally, from the Toskes tribe, and a Chief or a younger brother, when called upon, frequently levies a large body of men, at a monthly stipend, paid by the Porte, and for which they furnish their own arms and national dress, and at whose head he marches to any part of the Empire like a free lance of the middle ages.

The Osmanli families are rare, and, with the exception of the great hereditary Chiefs who descend from the early conquerors and are scattered on their estates, are chiefly to be found in the towns; but the great bulk of the Mussulmans in Albania are descended from Christians who were forced to become converts, or did so by whole districts, from self-interest, in order to share the superior advantages enjoyed by the Moslems.

A large Christian Albanian tribe exists in Northern Albania, called the Myrdita, reckoned at 140,000 souls, who have, for centuries, furnished contingents to the Ottoman armies: they fight under a peculiar banner, and have a post of honour assigned to them. While within their mountains they are almost independent, being governed by a Prince of their own; and being Latins, as is everywhere the case among the Christians of Northern Albania, they receive their bishops and clergy direct from Rome.

There is certainly very little fanatical feeling in general on the part of Moslems and Christians towards each other in this province; they even, in certain parts, intermarry and live on very good terms, each keeping their several fasts and feasts: probably the little bigotry which exists is owing to the independent position of the warlike Christian tribes, and the fact also, previously mentioned, of most of the Mussulman rural population being the descendants of Christians. The Latin Christians of the north, however, and the Greeks of Epirus, hate each other with all the virulence of sectarians. Blood feuds still prevail, to a great extent, in Northern Albania, especially in Ghegheria, where the population have never been even partially disarmed, and the privilege is, I believe, granted to them, as they have not, of late years, taken part in the many Greco-Albanian insurrections; added to which, they have to guard themselves against the Montenegrins who continually harass their frontier, robbing, killing, cutting off heads, noses, and ears, and committing at this day all the atrocities charged against the Turks of old. In these countries quarrels have been handed down for centuries in the families of the Chiefs and their followers, but in Epirus private vengeances are much more rare. All through Albania the feudal power of the Beys is fast disappearing, the heavy blows dealt to them by Ali Pacha, who absorbed nearly all their districts, and the different insurrections they have taken part in since then (after being restored, from political motives, by the Porte on the fall of that tyrant), and which were most ruthlessly put down by wholesale massacres and confiscations, has, joined with the gradual improvement of the country since the measures of reform were introduced by Sultan Mahomed, sapped their strength; and many of their properties, particularly of the minor Chiefs, are fast passing, through their own imprudence, into the hands of the Christians, but still a very long time will elapse before they lose all influence. Nowhere is antiquity of descent more venerated than in Albania, and a race of educated and enlightened Beys would have it in their power to effect great improvements in the province from the effect of their personal influence and example. Education among the Mussulmans of the province is usually of the simplest kind, and they are far outstripped by the Greek race, who have established large schools at Janina, and in which some of the most celebrated learned men of modern Greece have taught as professors. The most important of these establishments have been formed by the generosity of private individuals and date from many years back, the celebrated brothers Zozimas having alone contributed sums which are estimated to produce nearly 10,000*l.* a-year for the support of different gymnasiums; but, from maladministration, as well as from the creation of the Universities of Corfu and, later, of Athens, they have greatly fallen off, and now only two or three very indifferent schools are supported out of this munificent sum, which is under the control of the Archbishop of Janina and other trustees.

The amount and distribution of the population of the jurisdiction is most difficult to ascertain; no really reliable statistics can be obtained: the generally

received account gives a population of about 350,000 to Epirus, of whom 220,000 are Christians, and the total number assigned to the whole province of Albania is about 1,200,000, of which number two-thirds are Christians.

At present the province is in its normal state, viz., constantly attacked on the Montenegro frontier in the north, while in the south Epirus is threatened by an invasion from Greece, which it is again rumoured is in preparation.

The Commission of Inquiry of the Sadr-a-zam was anxiously expected, but the recent affairs of Syria have absorbed all interest, and now the agitators are doing their best to improve the occasion and persuade the population that a massacre is intended here also and to arm in self-defence. If any invasion from Greece takes place, or a movement commences in the north, it is impossible to foresee how far it may become serious, especially if sustained by the hope of a foreign intervention. At present I do not think that there is the least disposition to move. The preponderance of number is in favour of the Christians; but they have no real oppression to complain of, though they may prefer founded accusations of laxity of administration and of corruptions, equally applicable, however, to their own authorities as well as to the Turkish officials.

The most pressing want in this province is roads. Surveys have been made and innumerable promises also, but each succeeding Pasha leaves the matter where he found it, or, indeed, in rather a worse condition, as the roads made by Ali Pasha, and also the works of irrigation executed by him, have been suffered to perish; not a piastre is expended in repairs of bridges, &c., if it possibly can be avoided, and each day the means of transport become worse, though the peasants pay taxes, and would gladly, if property directed, undertake the necessary works, as there is nothing in the advantage of which they are so strongly impressed as that of possessing good communications.

Some telegraphic lines are mooted for this province, and a cable from Brindisi is landed at Avlona, the wires running thence north to Scutari, while others will connect the south with Janina and Monastir, the whole being brought into the main Constantinople line at Nissa. These, no doubt, will be of great advantage, but cannot benefit the province to the degree which the opening of one good road from Arta to Janina, or even the repair of the present one, would effect. Having made this imperfect sketch of the condition presented by this province, I pass to the remaining queries transmitted by your Excellency.

2. No statistics exist on this subject which are at all reliable. The gross amount of the population of Epirus and Albania is stated generally at 1,200,000, which I am inclined to believe is an exaggerated estimate. Of this number the Christians form at least two-thirds. The total population of Epirus is said to be about 350,000, of which number 220,000 are Christians.

3. The great bulk of the traders in towns are Christians, especially in Epirus, where the greater proportion of the peasantry in the villages are also Christians.

The majority of the proprietors of land are Mussulmans. I have seen an approximate estimate of the number of houses in Epirus, which gives 42,632 Christian dwellings and 22,400 Turkish dwellings; and as, in Turkey, five inhabitants are usually reckoned to each house, the total souls may be taken at 110,000 Turks and 221,150 Christians. Total, 331,150.

I have not been able to obtain any return of Northern Albania, but the relative proportion of the inhabitants there presents, I think, more of the Mahometan element, and, as everywhere else, the great majority of the landed proprietors are of that faith.

4. All Ottoman subjects, whether Mahometans or Christians, can hold landed property on equal conditions; but no Christian (not a subject), can, according to the letter of the law, hold landed property. This, however, is practically evaded, and great numbers of foreigners hold land, by a fiction, in the names of their wives, if Ottoman subjects, or of female relatives, or in the names, lent for the occasion, by Ottoman Christian subjects.

5. Christians can exercise all trades and callings in towns on precisely the same footing as Mussulmans, the only condition, in either case, being the payment of the taxes fixed by law on the shops, bazaar, police, &c.

6. I think that generally the Christian peasantry and the Mussulman are very much on a par with respect to amount of well-being enjoyed by each; in their villages, of course, this differs greatly in different districts, as where there

are rich soils and other favourable circumstances, you find rich villages and more comfort, while in the sterile mountain-regions are seen a far poorer class of peasantry, and this whether the occupants are Christian or Mussulman. I have been particularly struck by the air of comfort which pervades the great proportion of Christian villages. Each house has a little garden or orchard (which is exempt from tax), and the house itself is usually quite equal to the tenements of the peasantry on the continent of Europe, and far better than the cabins of Ireland. Horses, sheep, goats, and poultry are always to be seen, and even pigs occasionally: this latter, of course, where there are no Turks. The poorest class of habitations are those of the nomadic Wallachians, and are accounted for by their habits of moving, according to the seasons, with their flocks and herds; and although for ages they have always returned to the same spot, yet they make no attempt to build anything at all permanent. They are Christians, and speak a mixture of Roumain and corrupt Romaic, and they are doubtless of the same race as the principal inhabitants of the Principalities.

7. Christian evidence is always admitted in the Courts of Justice, but I think it doubtful whether, in cases between a Mussulman and a Christian, it carries the same weight as Mahometan evidence.

8. There can be no doubt that the Christian population is now in a far more favourable position than they occupied twenty years ago, when the Pashas were practically irresponsible, and any tyranny or exaction might be practised, so far as the Christians were concerned, with perfect impunity. Each year since the promulgation of the Edict of Gulhané has witnessed a gradual improvement in the position of the Christians; and when the old state of things is understood, the surprise is that the Government have been able so successfully to contend with the prejudices and fanaticism of the Mussulmans as to have been enabled to raise the Christians to the position they now are in. Who, ten years, or even six years ago, would have believed it possible for Christians and Turks to deliberate judicially, as in the Medjlis, side by side, together, each representing their own class? Life and property, unless in some outbreak where the Government authorities are overpowered, are safe, titles to property are recognized, and, so far as the Government is concerned, they certainly attempt to administer equal justice, though, no doubt, the corruption of the subordinate officials, which extends, more or less, through every class, paid or unpaid, Turk or Christian, often defeats the good faith and intentions of the Porte.

9. Athough, nominally, the Christians are equal before the law, yet, practically, and in spite of the very large toleration extended, such equality cannot be said entirely to exist. A principal grievance with the Christians is, that although they contribute a large share of the taxes, they fill scarcely any places whatever under the Government,—these being almost exclusively reserved for Mussulmans. The largest religious toleration prevails, all sects managing, absolutely and without interference from the Porte, their own internal affairs. There is, however, one point only which the Porte has not hitherto yielded to the repeated solicitations, and that is, the use of bells in belfrys in places of Christian worship. Although, in some cases, the use of bells is permitted, yet there exists a strong feeling against such a symbol, if I may so term it, being freely allowed to all Christian churches; and where they are permitted to be used, they are generally placed so as not to be at all conspicuous. I consider that a permission to erect campaniles and to use bells would be most gratefully received by the Christians, and would remove what they feel as a most galling mark of inferiority of rights, as well as a tacit insult to their faith.

10. I believe that nothing would be more distasteful to the Christians than the announcement that they were henceforth to perform personal military service, instead of paying the Nizamié, or tax substituted of late years. In fact, the bare rumour of such an intention on the part of the Porte would, I feel convinced, lead to a large emigration of those of an age liable to conscription; and although it is a favourite theme to harp upon the injustice of excluding them from military service, yet the Christians are too well aware of the advantage they derive from exemption to be believed sincere in their military aspiration.

The exclusive conscription of Ottomans no doubt greatly tends to exhaust the race; but, on the other hand, to raise bodies of Christian troops, or even to form mixed corps, would be a very doubtful policy for the Porte to pursue.

11. I do not think that any difficulty exists as to the construction of new, or repair of old, religious edifices, excepting those obstacles which are invariably

thrown in their way by the priests, through whose hands the application must pass. All applications are first made to the Bishop officially, by petition; he then forwards his opinion and explanation, and also a plan of the edifice, to Constantinople to be submitted to the Patriarch, who grants or withholds his sanction, and who obtains, if he consents, the requisite firman from the Porte, which is then dispatched to the local Ottoman authority. All these steps, however, must be facilitated by bribes, "presents" being required by everybody concerned in the transaction, from the Patriarch downwards. Foreign influence (Consular) is constantly invoked in these matters; and lately a petition was presented to me by some Ionians, trustees of a church here, requesting that I would obtain them leave to use a belfry, which it appeared they had erected without having the consent of the authority. I pointed out the proper course of proceeding—through the Bishop: but, instead of complying with the legal method to obtain their object, I subsequently heard that they had petitioned the Russian Consul, who had applied to his Embassy, and shortly afterwards a firman arrived, permitting the erection of the belfry, which already existed, and the placing of the bell.

One of the most galling restrictions to Christians which exist, is the denial in many places to their churches of the use of bells, to call them to worship and to celebrate their feasts; and it is constantly cited by them as a visible evidence of their inequality with respect to their Mussulman fellow-subjects, who certainly cling with fanatical tenacity to this relic of an avowed ancient superiority, and the abrogation of which, in the thickly populated Mahometan districts, it will require some determination and energy to effect.

With the above exception, the very largest toleration is afforded to all professions of faith and to the exercise of worship.

12. I do not know of any case in which an act of oppression can be charged as emanating directly from the Government; but no doubt it is within the power of the Governors, under the present system of administration, to postpone or evade decisions on complaints brought before them, so as to amount, in point of fact, to a denial of justice. And it may be said that, in very many instances, instead of deciding a case on its own merits, it too frequently happens that extraneous influences are brought to bear, and the party with the weaker purse or the least interest goes to the wall.

Cases of violence towards Christians are very rare, at least in Epirus; but in Northern Albania, amidst a population such as that of Scutari and Ghegheria, which has never been disarmed, and where the Tanzimat is almost practically inoperative, they occasionally occur, and may always be attributed to personal ebullitions of the old fanatical religious animosity which unfortunately still subsists between the races, and which breaks out on occasions where their interests come in contact, but are in nowise chargeable as the act of the Government, who do their best to smooth these hatreds, which are by no means exclusively confined to Moslem and Christian, but are equally virulent between Greek and Latin.

The only case of violence I am cognizant of here was the act of a jealous woman, the wife of a Turkish officer, who, during her husband's absence, caused one of his "chouses" to seize and convey in handcuffs to the barrack-prison, a Greek woman who she alleged had, by acts of sorcery, bewitched her husband. Immediately on the fact becoming known to the officer in command, he released the woman and punished the "chouse." The affair was brought before the Medjlis, and the woman accepted and received a compensation of 700 piastres, which the officer's wife was condemned to pay to her.

In all cases of a Turk taking the law into his own hands, it is always termed an "oppression," and put to the Government account; but the reverse case, when a Turk may suffer at a Christian hand, is considered quite natural,—as illustrated lately by an Ionian at Arta, who dragged an Ottoman subject tied to his horse's tail, through the streets to the Vice-Consulate,—a deed which, if perpetrated by a Moslem, would have rung through the whole district as a Government "oppression:" but, being the act of a Christian, is quite differently interpreted by his co-religionists; and, in consequence I was asked to mitigate the punishment inflicted.

13. There are no native Protestants, as far as I am aware, within the Consular jurisdiction of Albania.

14. A vast deal of the discontent among the Christians arises from the petty exactions and tyranny of their own ecclesiastics, who exercise an almost

unbounded authority, recognized by the Porte, over them. Here, as everywhere else in Turkey, every sort of injustice, malversation of funds, bribery, and corruption is openly attributed by the Christians to their clergy.

The lower grades of priests, who are miserably poor, are obliged to labour manually, and to dig and delve in the fields, like any other peasant, for a living, and are usually grossly ignorant; while the upper ranks roll in riches obtained from the vast unaudited funds of the Church, and are generally mixed up in every intrigue by which any money, influence, or position is to be obtained.

The expected inquiry of the Sadr-a-zam will probably present a plentiful crop of complaints against the Greek Bishops and Priests, and they are already using every means to pacify their angry flocks, and avoid the disagreeable exposures which may ensue.

With regard to the Christian authorities in the Councils, the Heads of Communities, &c., they are by no means generally guided by any abstract ideas of justice; and the usual arguments of the suitors have quite as much influence with them as with any Mussulman, who, as a body, I consider to be of far higher principle, more truthful, and more honest than the bulk of the Christian population.

15. Christians and Jews are everywhere admitted as members of the Medjlis. I do not think that they are, in the great majority of cases, at all more progressive than the Turks; and, if they were, the caste superiority of the Turks would, in general, if opposed to their views, render their efforts abortive. They are not usually of any advanced ideas or education, and owe their election by their co-religionists to their position as persons in easy circumstances —which is a requisite qualification, as they are unpaid. Bribes and all sorts of corruption is, in very many cases, reported to influence them; and they may be said to act very often as the mere registrars of decrees to which they affix their seals,—thus acquiescing, if they do not approve.

16. Although, as I have stated in reply to No. 15, I do not consider the Christian members of the Medjlis to be usually more favourable on the whole to progress than the Turks, yet I do not think them more obstructive; but I believe that their functions might be usefully abridged and rendered of more utility to the public service by limiting their powers to an authority over cases which, in Europe, would be police matters, awarding punishment on the spot to lighter criminal affairs, and taking cognizance of claims to a fixed amount: but, in heavier cases, taking evidence only, and reserving such for the superior tribunals. I would likewise charge them with local improvements, and the execution and surveillance of roads, bridges, repairs, internal police of towns, &c.

17. I think that the best effect would result from withdrawing all judicial functions, excepting in small police and civil cases, from the Medjlis, and that the creation of Superior Tribunals, both civil and criminal, with paid Judges, would work well. Such tribunals should be independent of the Provincial Governor, who should simply see that their decrees were executed, but they should be responsible to a Minister of Justice. A Public Prosecutor on the part of the Government should conduct all criminal cases; all civil cases should be heard by petition, and a day appointed for the hearing. The Court should be open to the public; a Civil and Criminal Code, enacting penalties, should be drawn up. All Christian civil and criminal cases should be judged by this Code, before Christian Judges, reserving only the purely ecclesiastical cases for the Patriarch or Bishops. Mixed Christian and Mahometan cases should be tried before two Judges, one of either creed, and the Cadi should not intervene in any respect, his Court considering only the cases in which both parties were Mussulmans. No doubt at first it would be difficult to find competent men, but the introduction of such a system would soon create a class of educated persons who would devote themselves to legal studies.

The Courts in each province would then consist of the Medjlis of towns, one Superior Civil and one Superior Criminal Court at each capital, and appeals from which would lay to a Supreme Court at Constantinople; but in order to avoid litigation, no appeal should be made under certain values, and none in criminal cases, excepting to the Minister of Justice.

18. I do not think that the Mahometans evince any desire to make converts; renegades are generally very badly viewed. I have heard of no instances of conversion by compulsion, nor can I ascertain that anything of the sort has been charged against the Mahometans in this province for many years.

19. I have heard of only one case of an alleged attempted conversion of a female in Epirus, and this one appeared to me to have been a mere pretext seized upon by a Greek Ottoman subject (acting as British Consular Agent), to show his zeal, and gratify at the same time safely his hereditary hatred to the Turks by forcing the girl, who was very young, away from the Turkish service in which she lived.

It is usual if a Greek boy or girl engage themselves, even voluntarily, in the houses of Turks as servants, to declare that they are being converted, without the smallest proof being adducible that such is the case.

The only cases—and none of these are recent—of female conversions show that the predominant feeling which induces them is love. A rather curious case of the kind happened here a few years back, when a Greek girl, who had fallen in love with a young Bey, abjured her faith, adopted the veil, and resisted both her own ecclesiastical authorities, as well as the Provincial Governor's orders to induce her to return to her family, and finally only did so by the interference of my predecessor. Many of the cases of conversion of females in former days arose from a desire to better their position by marrying Mussulmans of some substance.

In this province there is comparatively little bigotry, Turks being found married to Christians who retain their faith; and less than sixty years ago whole flocks of Christians became Mussulmans in order to avoid the haratch and other taxes; and, as may be supposed, their descendants are very indifferent Mussulmans at the present time.

20. I think that the measures I have described in Query 17 would greatly tend to facilitate prompt justice by removing from the Provincial Governor and the Medjlis the power to evade and postpone decisions. Cases may be rendered interminable, unless backed by bribes or interest; the hearing of all petitions within a certain time might be made imperative; defeated appellants should pay expenses; witnesses should be compensated for attendance on a scale laid down; no pleading should be employed, but the cases stated by petition to the Court, and established by documents and *viva voce* sworn evidence; a small stamp tax to be paid on petitions, and on register and copy of decrees. Especial care should be taken to render the Judges as independent as possible of all extraneous influence, and no Consular interference in any way admitted excepting to watch the case of a subject; and any improper judgment in such should be only referable to the Minister of Justice and the respective Embassy.

A strict separation of civil and criminal prisoners should be enforced, and the custody and fair treatment of the prisoners should be in the hands of the Executive Government.

21. I consider that one of the first measures undertaken ought to be the construction of roads, in order to develop the resources of the province, which are great, but are now, from the want of communications, of little value to the inhabitants or profit to the Porte. The providing means of communication I look upon as one of the most important steps towards introducing a higher civilization through the increased intercourse and commerce which would ensue, and which would gradually break down barriers of caste intolerance, and greatly assist to blend the races by creating a community of interests. An extension of commerce consequent on improved communications would employ profitably thousands of men who now live from hand to mouth, and offer the services of their long guns and yataghans to any turbulent Bey who will employ them; and one of the happiest days for this country will be that in which the purchase by foreigners of land is admitted, but until this takes place it is difficult to foresee any material progress, for there is little enterprise, and capital is wanting. The Beys, who are the principal landowners, are usually quite uneducated; and as their habits are very extravagant, and they neglect their affairs, their large properties will never improve in their own hands unless under the stimulating example of success and improvements achieved by foreigners: as it is, the more intelligent Greeks are rapidly stripping them of their possessions, which pass by a process of mortgages, at enormous interest, into the hands of the money-lenders.

The new system of taxation promises to work well, both in the interest of the Porte and of the people, but when carried out, an end must be put to the petty exactions of the Beys on their villages and districts, as well as of the forced labours which they sometimes demand; these are all part of the feudalism

which still obtains throughout the country, but which clashes completely with the promises of the Government, and affords a pretext to agitators to cause discontent. I think that if a system could be devised which would admit of the peasants becoming proprietors of land, it would tend to produce more satisfaction and tranquillity among them.

An improved system of police is greatly wanted; the present "derbend" is nearly useless as an armed force, and perfectly so as a detective one, and to prevent crime—the primary object of all police. It appears to me that each district should nominate, furnish, and pay their own police; and it is certain that the perfect acquaintance these men would have with the person, character, and habits of their fellow-villagers would greatly assist in detecting outrage and robbery, and lessen the desire to commit crime by proving that it cannot be perpetrated with impunity.

The villages should be rendered responsible for brigandage, and obliged, under smart penalties, to point out their retreats and assist at captures, and immediate punishment should be dealt to the culprits. It has been clearly shown that energetic measures will always restrain brigandage in this province; and Husni Pasha, who two years since hung seventeen of the guilty, effectually stopped the robberies and murders which rendered the country unsafe, and the effects of his decision are still beneficially felt.

The creation of Superior Civil and Criminal Tribunals is urgently required, composed of paid Judges, leaving only to the present Medjlis the functions of a correctional police, and the adjudication in Civil cases up to a certain value, as well as certain municipal authority towards making local improvements.

The Provincial Governors ought to make, each year, a tour of their Government, presenting a report on its state to the Porte, and inspect narrowly the proceedings of their subordinates; and each Mudir or Kaimakam ought in his district to do the same. I am convinced that this would give great confidence to the population, and render abuses more rare. Lastly, the spreading of light by education is greatly wanted, which I need not enlarge upon here, as it forms the subject of Query No. 22.

22. I think that it would be extremely difficult to overcome the prejudices of the different religions sufficiently to allow them to receive education together: the Greeks would most certainly throw every obstacle in the way. Experiments of mixed schools have been, I am informed, already tried, but the result was a constant bickering between these children, who imbibe, from the moment they are capable of receiving an impression, a spirit of rivalry and of dislike deeply felt, if not always displayed by the conquered race; not only would the Greeks not tolerate association with Mahometans, but their fanatical bigotry in religion would be equally opposed to education imparted in company with Latins or Jews. I believe that a mixed education if it can be brought about would gradually bear fruit, and be most useful. Some system of giving more extended ideas through a regular course of instruction would greatly benefit the Mussulman population, both high and low: their education is now confined chiefly to a slight knowledge of the Koran, and the merest rudiments of other instruction. Schools would be of great service where better methods of agriculture could be taught, and when simple experiments in science could be shown proving the advantage of applying it to improvements applicable to the state of the province, when, for instance, streams flowing a few feet below the level of the soil, and which would fertilise immense districts, are utterly lost from a total ignorance of how to raise the water.

Janina at the present moment possesses large schools founded by private individuals, chiefly by the brothers Zozimas, who devoted all their fortunes to the encouragement of learning, and are most liberally endowed. Before the Greek Revolution many celebrated men taught in them, and in fact they were the focus of the revived Greek learning. After the establishment of the Universities of Corfu and, later, of Athens, they lost much of their importance, and have greatly sunk, and the large funds which are administered by trustees, including the Archbishop, &c., are, according to general public opinion, diverted into other channels not contemplated by the munificent founders of these institutions.

23. I do not think that at present the scheme of a Christian Vice-Governor would work well, but I believe that it would be more successful in a very few years hence, when the promises made by the Porte are fully carried out, and a

gradual infiltration of Christians in other official posts has preceded such a nomination; but a sudden change of the sort would only tend to unsettle the populations still more at present, for although it appears a paradox to say so, yet a step of the kind, indicating an earnest and real intention of the Porte to carry out progress, would be peculiarly disagreeable to the Christians in general, whose last wish is to see any amelioration take place in a sense likely to be conducive to giving more stability to the rule of the Porte; the truth being that the real grievance with them is the presence of the Turks under any condition whatever in these provinces, and the antipathy of race, powerfully fanned by religious bigotry, is such that no concession of any kind will ever entirely reconcile, although it may perhaps eventually smooth even the existing animosities of the conquered races.

I think also that the nomination of a Christian Pasha of equal power with a Turkish one, would lead at present to complications with the Beys, who would be little disposed to view in him a representative of the Sultan's authority.

24. There can be no doubt that for years past foreign influence has been actively working to foment discontent and disaffection towards the Government of the Porte. The Southern part of this jurisdiction (Epirus) is conterminous with the Greek frontier, and a constant propaganda is kept up from that side, by means of agents and publications; the Greek press teems with periodicals which are chiefly intended for the perusal of the Greeks of Turkey, and no statement can be too strong for belief, provided only it is directed against the Turks, their Government, religion, or race. Latterly it seems to have been agreed to, to instil into the population that the French are to be looked to as the champions of Eastern nationalities, and accordingly every day brings reports of what has been done, or is about to be performed, by the Emperor Napoleon in their favour. All the Greek coffee-shops ring with political discussions and abuse of the Turks, who, however, look on with great calmness, and allow the most perfect latitude in the expression of personal opinion on political or other matters.

It is very difficult to bring forward instances of interference, as of course the chief actors keep well behind the scenes. During the insurrection in Epirus of 1854, the Greek Consul at Janina was detected in direct correspondence with the leaders of the movement, and latterly it has been reported to me that both the Russian and Greek Consulates at Janina are actively engaged, in concert with the malcontents, in organizing the complaints to be presented to the Sadr-a-zam, and the minor Consular Agents, who are usually Greeks, may be, along with their chiefs, safely set down as using their best efforts to discredit the Government instead of supporting it.

The Christians of Epirus being of Greek race are naturally the enemies of the Turks; but the Ionians are not a whit behind their brethren of the Continent in their animosity, which they take care to exhibit (and with perfect safety, as British-protected subjects) on every occasion, a remarkable instance of which occurred lately, when a Senator of Corfu, M. Dandolo, published a most inflammatory address to the Greeks of Epirus, Thessaly, and Crete, inciting them to rebellion: nor do I think that our Agents, when Ionians, can be viewed as at all conducing to strengthen the Ottoman authorities, or as generally anxious to diminish any bad feeling which may already exist between the races.

The Russian influence presents itself under the double aspect of sympathisers and as coreligionists, and presents of vestments, &c., to churches at Arta have lately been made, and others are promised, I understand, here. They occasionally feel the pulse of the Greeks on the Slave question, but meet with no response, as all the aspirations of the Christians of Epirus are purely Hellenic. In Northern Albania there are large and warlike tribes of Latin Christians receiving their bishops and priests from Rome; they seem, however, devoid of the distant political views which animate the Greeks as well as the more northern Slave races of the Turkish Empire, and although semi-independent they in many cases serve under the Turkish banner, and bear a high reputation for fidelity and bravery. Montenegro is surrounded on two sides by the northern frontier of Albania, and a constant series of assaults takes place from thence on the Turkish posts: latterly these attacks have become more frequent and are more serious than for years past, and this in spite of the late delimitation of the frontier, and are evidently part of the concerted plan of action against the Ottomans which has

shown itself in so many places recently, and with another phase of which we are again threatened here on the southern frontier.

25. I do not think that any cases of passports being obtained from Greece and exchanged for Russian ones have occurred here lately, nor would the Turkish authorities of this province acknowledge such documents: the fact of the frontiers of Turkey and Greece being conterminous here (Southern Epirus) causes a greater scrutiny to be exercised as to the rights of protection claimed by bearers of passports, than in the provinces of the interior, or even at Constantinople itself.

The Porte disputes at present the right to protection of a great number of the Hellenic Consular subjects in Albania, claiming them as Ottomans; most of the cases arising are those of families who left the Province during the Greek Revolution, and subsequently returned.

No. 9.

Consul Skene to Lord J. Russell.—(Received August 24.)

(No. 47.)

My Lord, *Aleppo, August* 14, 1860.

IN compliance with an instruction received from Sir Henry Bulwer, I have the honour to inclose, for your Lordship's information, a copy of my Replies to Queries on the state of this province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. SKENE.

Inclosure in No. 9.

Consul Skene to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Aleppo, August* 4, 1860.

IN compliance with the instruction conveyed to me by your Excellency's circular of June 11, which I received by last mail, I have the honour to subjoin the following Replies to the Queries therein contained:—

1. This province is in a good condition as regards the amount of production. But, unfortunately, the productive class does not enjoy in peace the fruits of labour. A portion of its produce is carried off by the nomadic Arabs, and extorted from the peasantry by the farmers of the tithes.

Vast plains of the most fertile land lie waste on account of the incursions of the Bedouins, who drive the agricultural population westward, in order to secure pasture for their increasing flocks of sheep and herds of camels. I have seen twenty-five villages plundered by a single incursion of Sheik Mohammed Dukhy with 2,000 Beni Sachar horsemen. I have visited a fertile district which possessed 100 villages twenty years ago, and found only a few lingering Fellahs, destined soon to follow their kindred to the hills ranging along the seaboard. I have explored towns in the Desert, with well-paved streets, houses still roofed, and their stone doors swinging on the hinges, ready to be occupied, and yet quite untenanted; thousands of acres of fine arable land spreading around them, with tracks of watercourses for irrigation, now yielding but a scanty pasture to the sheep and camels of the Bedouin. This overlapping of the Desert on the cultivated plains commenced eighty years ago, when the Anezi tribes migrated from Central Arabia in search of more extended pasturage, and overran Syria. It has now reached the sea on two points, near Acre, and between Latakia and Tripoli.

The Arab, however, does not always carry off the whole stock of the villager, but is frequently satisfied by a conciliatory offering in money and grain. Something is thus left for extortion by the tax-gatherer. His operations are conducted in an equally open manner with those of the nomadic plunderer. When the tithes are put up to auction, the members of the Provincial Council select the villages whose revenues they wish to farm under the name of a retainer. They agree not to compete with each other, and use their joint endeavours to prevent

others from outbidding them. When the highest price is offered, the Pasha consults the Council, which declares it to be the full value; and a profitable bargain is obtained by the Councillor whose turn has come. Then begins the pressure on the villager. His grain is threshed and ready for sale, but he must not move it until the tithe is taken by the farmer. Prices are falling in the market with the daily increasing abundance. He implores permission to sell, and receives it only on consenting to double or treble the tax. In lieu of 10 per cent., there are instances of 40 per cent. being thus wrung from him, when the want of the necessaries of life for his family prevents his waiting longer. The peasant is next forced to convey the collector's share to town without remuneration, to feed his numerous satellites, to bring him presents of poultry, lambs, and forage, which latter produce is not tithed. He has no means of redress, for the voice of the all-powerful Council drowns every complaint. The Pasha is appealed to, and shrugs his shoulders.

Still the agricultural population is not plunged in that hopeless state of destitution which might be expected under these conditions: so rich is the soil, so industrious and frugal the labourer.

In the towns, until quite lately, trade and manufactures were in a flourishing state. Since the revival, however, of the old feelings of aversion and animosity between the Mussulman and Christian communities, a disadvantageous change has consequently become apparent also in the material circumstances of the population. Want of confidence in the future is withdrawing capital from circulation; trade stagnates; and one-half of the looms previously worked are now at rest.

I feel wholly unable to account for this ebullition of political excitement which seems to pervade the whole Empire, unless I were to hazard the conjecture that it is produced by the secret agency of Russian emissaries or the violent protection of the Christians by French Consular authorities. The connection between cause and effect is not sufficiently distinct, however, to justify a positive assertion that these are its sources.

The state of the Mussulman population of this Consular district is different from that existing in other provinces of the Ottoman Empire which are more in contact with European ideas. Here the dominant race is still what it was three or four centuries ago, proud and intolerant. It is not a mongrel produced by the inroad of Frank trade and the engrafting of a so-called civilization on the old Mahometan stock. Commerce with Great Britain, Austria, France, and Switzerland, has been introduced to a considerable extent, but it remains a separate element, and exercises but little influence on the Mussulman mind. The descendant of the Arab grandee, as of his Turkish conqueror, lives unconscious of the encroachment of foreign enterprise and blind to the rise of Christian supremacy.

The glorious traditions of the two great factions which once divided Turkish society and have now fallen into oblivion elsewhere, are still fresh at Aleppo. The affiliation of the Janissaries has never been eradicated here, and they meet in secret to keep alive the memory of their past preponderance. The green-turbaned Shereefs claim, as of old, and receive, the veneration of the people, for their descent from the Prophet. It is in vain that one talks to them of the altered circumstances of Islam, which are incredible to them. Vegetating in their narrow circle of contemptuous exclusiveness, they are animated only by personal and party rivalries. Their religion of pride cannot admit that a religion of humility is compatible with power abroad or prosperity at home. What they hear of Christendom is, therefore, regarded by them as an idle tale. The condition of the Mussulman population of this northern capital of Syria is thus a remnant of what Turkey has been rather than an example of what she is.

The Christians of Aleppo are a keen, money-making people, clever in trade, miserly at home, abject without support, and insolent when unduly protected. The great mass of them live in a state of chronic terror. This was merely a reflex of what they suffered in the massacre of 1850, and their panic is now enhanced by the disasters of Mount Lebanon and Damascus. The measures adopted to prevent an outbreak have hitherto been successful, and, if they continue so, it will be a source of no small satisfaction to me, having been called upon to co-operate in them with the competent authorities.

This seat of provincial government, surrounded by the most productive

tracts of country, possessing, under ordinary circumstances, a trade of great activity and extent, and amply provided with all the elements of abundance, is nevertheless in a condition of unvarying financial embarrassment. The method, or rather want of method, of management followed, is to supply by loans, at usurious rates of interest, the deficit produced by allowing the revenue to fall into arrear. Speculators purchase, at a large discount, the orders on the Treasury, which are given in default of cash, and pounce upon the receipts before they reach the chest. There is, probably, also an under-current of actual robbery of the public money, but I am not prepared to make an assertion that such exists, although the fact that Members of the Councils, and other public servants, born of poor families, should live in affluence on small salaries and realize large fortunes, can leave little doubt on the subject. The result of all this is, that we have here a province yielding a gross annual income of 19,000,000 piastres, exporting every year produce of the average value of 25,000,000 piastres, and importing foreign goods to the amount of 50,000,000 piastres, and yet offering the continual spectacle of an empty Treasury, leaving salaries in arrear for many months, and dealing with usurers at the rate of 40 and 50 per cent. per annum. Nor does this embarrassment arise from an excess of expenditure, for the nominal and ostensible outlay is always one or two millions below the real amount of the revenue. The hypothesis of peculation can alone explain the matter.

2. In the year 1849 a census was made of the male population of this Pashalic, but little reliance can be placed on it, owing to the interest which the separate communities have in concealing their real numbers to diminish collective taxation as practised in Turkey, and to secure exemption from the full weight of the conscription and its corresponding impost on Christians in lieu of military service. A Registrar for recording births and deaths has been appointed since then; but the want of efficient inspection, and the general carelessness prevalent in most public offices in Turkey, render the estimates very imperfect. We are, therefore, reduced to the use of approximate quantities in this as in many other statistical data. I should calculate the Christian population to be about one-fifth of the whole, and the Mahometan four-fifths, with a trifling deduction for Jews, Druses, and Ansairis. The population of the Province must in the aggregate be slightly under 500,000.

3. All the proprietors in the country are Mussulmans.

Almost all the traders in the towns are Christians.

Almost all the cultivators are Mussulmans; and the pastoral tribes of Arabs, Kurds, and Turcomans, are nominally Mussulmans.

Almost all the manufacturing population is Christian.

4. Of the four species of tenure of land, two only are open to Christians:—

1st. "Mulkh," or freehold property, and

2nd. "Miri," or crown lands, which they can occupy by right of a deed, called "tabou," conferring on them the usufruct for ever, on condition that they shall not lie uncultivated for three successive years, under penalty of their returning to the Sultan.

The other two species of tenure can only be enjoyed by Mussulmans, and the nature of their origin justifies the principle. Thus, "vakouf," or pious foundations, are held by the descendants of those who bequeathed them for the support of mosques and medresseths, and cannot be alienated; "malikanch," or fiefs, still belong to the families of Spahis, who had received grants in return for the military service which they rendered in the wars of the State, or in conducting caravans of pilgrims in Syria to Mecca.

In all these kinds of titles, excepting the first, the real property of the land is vested in the Sultan, who, though he has nominally abolished feudalism in Turkey, retains the fee-simple of almost the whole of his dominions. Unlike that of the nations which subverted the Roman Empire in the West, the feudal system of the East secured a seigneurial right over the people to the Sovereign, untempered by that of the landed aristocracy, and this peculiarity of the Turkish social compact still exists, notwithstanding that feudalism ceased to be the law of the land under Sultan Mahmoud II. in pursuance of the purpose of his enlightened but less energetic uncle Selim III.

Freehold property, the best of tenures, is therefore within the reach of the

Sultan's Christian subjects. The fear, however, of unfair treatment deters them from becoming landholders; and it appears to me that the national tendency is also in favour of trade in preference to agriculture.

5. They can; and there is no difference, either in right or in practice.

6. There are no Christian villages in this part of Syria, excepting in the neighbourhood of Marash, where Armenian peasants cultivate the land of Mussulman proprietors, by whom they are protected, and their condition is consequently as good as that of the Mahometan peasantry.

7. It is not admitted; and the attempt is never made to obtain its admission. No case has occurred in connection with the business of this Consulate to raise the question. The practice is to appoint Arbitration Commissions when the results of a suit depend on Christian evidence, or to refer the decision to the Bishops; but this is, of course, only in civil, commercial, and correctional cases.

8. Most certainly. A change in favour of Christians was introduced twenty years ago by the Egyptian authorities, and it has been carried on by those of the Sultan. Ten years ago the Christians suffered greatly at the hands of the Mussulmans; but that outbreak was dependent on incidental causes, and left no retrograde effect. The progress in this respect has even reached a degree which is becoming dangerous to the Christians: the Mussulmans are jealous of their prosperity in trade, and exasperated by their arrogance when they obtain Consular protection.

9. There are none except the non-admission of Christian evidence in Courts of Justice, and of Christian soldiers in the army.

10. The Christians of Northern Syria are not a warlike people, like those of Mount Lebanon, or the Albanians, or the mountaineers of Crete. They have neither a taste for, nor a knowledge of, the use of arms. They are hardly ever even sportsmen. I do not believe that any Christian would prefer entering the military service to paying the tax in this part of the country. At Marash the offer was made by the Armenian community; but I am of opinion that it originated merely in the hope of obtaining relief from the tax, and that it would not have been realized if the Government had accepted it.

Serving in the army would, I think, be more advantageous to the Christians than paying the tax, provided the conscription were conducted in an equitable manner, which has not hitherto been the case. If, instead of taking all the young men from one district and none from another, those only were enlisted who could be spared from rural labour and the support of families, Christian recruits would return more useful members of society after seven years' military service than they are now. A people wanting in manliness, who tremble at the sight of a gun or sword, and dare not approach a horse, cannot but be improved by leading for a time a soldier's life. The sum of about 2*s*. 9*d*. a head per annum would also thus be saved to the whole community. The Christians in general are averse to the idea, however, by innate distaste and from fear of ill-treatment.

11. Christian churches have been built, of late, at Kessab, Marash, Aiutab, and Killis, without the least opposition or difficulty; and no molestation whatever had been experienced in the observance of Christian worship until two months ago when an incident of the kind occurred at Antioch; Mussulmans having entered the Church there during Divine service, and called out, "La illahé il Allah; Mehemmed resoul Allah!" (There is no God but God; Mahomet is the Prophet of God!), as reported by me at the time. No repetition of the offence has taken place, the Turkish authorities having punished the offenders.

12. Only one instance of oppression has occurred during the three years and a-half that I have been here, and it was solely on the part of the Government officers, as related in my despatch No. 19 of the 16th June, 1860. The great massacre of the Christians in 1850 was produced by rival claims amongst the Ayans of Aleppo, which ended in a general rush for plunder on the part of the Mussulman population.

13. Exclusively from the church which they have left.

14. The Christian population of this Consular district has no great grievances to complain of; and their own authorities seem to me to be in no way open to censure. Evils exist, but they are not peculiar to the Christians. Thus, a very great evil is the insecurity of life and property arising from the state of insubordination of the nomadic tribes; the Turkish authorities could do much to remedy this. The Christians suffer from the defects of the Commercial

Tariff more than the Mussulmans, however; and its revision would easily meet all the exigencies of the trade in manufactures. For example, the Aleppo goods called "alagia" are made to pay little more than 1 per cent. on their value, while those named "ghazi," not being specified in the Tariff, fall under a comprehensive clause, and pay 10 per cent.; manufacturers, therefore, have thrown the workmen of the latter article out of employment, and exporters cannot supply the demand for it, which is much greater than that for the former on account of its stronger and cheaper quality. The high price of provisions is a ground of complaint by both Christians and Mussulmans; this is due to the practice of members of the Councils being directly or indirectly interested in the farming of the tithes. If they were practically prevented from entering into such speculations, a different class of persons would take them up, and the influence of the Ayans would become beneficial in furthering the trade in provisions as owners of land, instead of being pernicious by impeding it to secure the greater gains of rapacity as uncontrolled collectors. The Christian authorities can do nothing to cope with so deep-seated an evil.

15. There are two Christian members of the Medjlis, but their presence at the sittings is a mere matter of form, as they take no part in deliberations, and are treated with utter disregard, never venturing to express dissent in any decision, even though it be calculated to injure their brother Christians.

These Councils are certainly less favourable to progress and good government than the officials of the Porte.

In my humble opinion the experiment of municipal institutions was made in a manner not in harmony with the existing state of the country. The feudal system of the East had degenerated when it produced the great barons of Turkey in the first quarter of the present century, Ali Tepedeleni, Ali of Stolatz, Kara Osman Oglu, Chassan Oglu, Haznadar Oglu, and others, equally powerful and independent; and it had reduced the body of the people to actual servitude. The spirit of industry was crushed by the narrow maxims of a military aristocracy. The country was on the verge of ruin. A counterpoise was sought for the oppression of Pashas of the old school. The remedy has outweighed the evil, and instead of one tyrant there are now many tyrants, each grasping his own advantage, and all inferior to the Pasha in qualifications for government. The desired control exists, but the local magnates are unworthy of the trust. The power of the functionaries sent from Constantinople, which is a whole century in advance of the provinces, is paralyzed by the corrupt action of the Ayans. A good Pasha is hampered; a bad one not checked. Men of integrity and public spirit may come from the capital, but are not to be found in the towns of the interior. The Pasha of the present day is an improvement on the old feudal Satrap; the unchanging Ayan is still a man of the same stamp; and the better is thus controlled by the worse. Composed of cruel, venal, and rapacious accomplices, the Medjlis oppresses the people and enriches itself, while Pashas are powerless, when willing, to cope with its collusive chicanery. Possessed of superior local information and experience, wielding a dangerous influence over the lower orders, which fear their iron rule, and well versed in all the trickery of Oriental intrigue, they rarely fail soon to reduce the most zealous Pasha to the condition of a mere instrument in their hands. He is made to feel the weight of their displeasure, and the value of their support, by the unwise credit which is given by the Porte to their collective censure or certificates of good conduct, and he generally subsides into letting them govern the province in his stead. If he himself be not above temptation, as may happen, the affair is of course more easily arranged, and the result is the same. I have followed the same familiar phases of provincial government with unvarying issue in Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Roumelia, in Asia Minor, and Syria, and I have thus been forced into strong convictions on the subject, which I hope to be held excused for thus expressing freely.

16. I cannot conceive the possibility of the powers of the Ayans being useful under any conditions without the standard of public morality being raised. If an equal number of the most respectable Christian merchants, however, were admitted into the Council, their weight and presence might go far to neutralize the baneful influence of its Mussulman members, and shame them into honesty.

17. It appears to me self-evident that judicial functions should not be entrusted to the local Councils as they are at present constituted. I doubt even that the Christian element could be advantageously introduced into the Courts

of Justice, except in so far as regards the formation of commercial tribunals; and I should, therefore, say that even a Council, modified as above stated, would be incapable of acting satisfactorily in a judicial capacity.

Mussulman law is a peculiar and abstruse study, which none but members of the Ulema make themselves masters of, and those of that learned body who come to the provinces as Cadis are frequently men of zeal for the public service, as well as integrity and legal acquirements. Their influence does not reach the Councils, where justice is in the market, and the prevalence of false witnesses almost incredible: persons of no other calling being always in waiting at the door to make any deposition that may be required for a few piastres. If separate tribunals were organized, it would, therefore, be the best plan to have their members, or at least their Presidents, sent from Constantinople to keep the corruption of local members in check.

18. None whatever. No instances have occurred of late years.

19. Nothing of the kind takes place.

20. The judicial establishment is thus constituted:—

The Mehkemeh is a Court of Justice conducted by the Cadi, with the assistance of the Mufti. The Cadi is a lawyer from the schools of Constantinople, and is allowed to remain only one year in each province. The Mufti is a native of the town, and holds his office at the pleasure of the Governor. He is neither a colleague nor a superior of the Cadi, but an independent collateral authority, whose duty it is to deliver a "fetva," a species of oracular axiom, applicable to each case after it has been tried, and before sentence is passed.

The Great Medjlis is a Council of uneducated Ayans, and public functionaries without legal education, which adds to its legitimate deliberative and usurped executive functions the office of passing judgment on evidence taken by the Medjlis el-Tahkik.

The Medjlis-el-Tahkik is a Council of also uneducated Ayans, for the investigation of penal cases.

There is no Commercial Tribunal at Aleppo, in spite of repeated orders to institute one.

The reforms I should think calculated to correct the defects of this system are:—

1st. The employment of lawyers instead of Ayans in the Medjlis-el-Tahkik.

2nd. The formation of a Court of Appeal, composed of lawyers; to perform also the judicial functions now fulfilled by the Great Medjlis.

3rd. The employment of a distinguished lawyer from Constantinople as Mufti, to act as Inspector of all the Courts, and correspond with the Minister of Justice, without being attached to the Mehkemeh as he is now.

4th. The complete independence of all judicial from the administrative authorities.

5th. The formation of a Commercial Court of Mussulman, Christian, Jewish, and European merchants, to be guided by the laws and usages of trade, without reference to Mussulman law.

6th. The abolition of the practice of making all gainers of suits pay the costs, litigation being often encouraged by the wish of the losers to revenge themselves in this way when their cases are untenable.

7th. The substitution of fines for imprisonment in all minor penal cases; the latter having no stigma in this country.

21. (1st.) A serious consideration of the question of the nomadic Arabs.

(2nd.) Vigilance to prevent abuses in the collection of the tithes.

(3rd.) Road-making; a bushel of wheat costs as much for carriage on the back of a camel or mule from Orfa to the shipping port as it does to purchase it in the interior.

(4th.) The detaching of regular troops over the country instead of employing irregulars, who exhaust the resources of the villages by living on them, and connive at plunder.

(5th.) Vigilance to prevent Consular protection being given to subjects of the Sultan, especially as regards religious communities, which are thus kept in a state of antagonism amongst themselves, and of disaffection towards the State.

22. In the present state of feeling between communities and sects, Christian parents might be averse to sending their children to be taught by Mussulmans,

and *vice versâ*, even although convinced that the education received would be exclusively secular. But, under ordinary circumstances, the study of Oriental languages by Christians has always been by the tuition of Mussulman teachers, and the College founded by the Franciscan Friars have been attended by both Mahometan and Jewish students. I should say that such schools might tend to smooth the asperities of religious prejudices, and unite the youth of different persuasions in that bond of school-fellowship which is so strong and enduring with us at home.

23. This appears to me the most felicitous idea that has yet been started for the settlement of a very complicated question. At Aleppo I feel confident that such an arrangement would work admirably. But the Christian Vice-Governor should be a functionary sent from Constantinople, commanding respect by his character and abilities.

24. Public opinion at Aleppo ascribes such attempts to French and Russian Agents. No one can doubt that the conduct of French Consular authorities has that effect, but it may not be with that intention. I conceive that, as far as France is concerned, the purpose is twofold: to gain influence in Turkey, and to propitiate the priest party in Europe. With Russia, however, the case presents itself in a more positive light. Rumours tending to sow dissension between Christians and Mussulmans can be traced to the Russian Consulate; and, on the only occasion of conflict which has occurred here, the language of my Russian colleague at several meetings of the Consular body justified the conclusion that he was more disposed to raise than to obviate difficulties between the two communities.

25. I have heard of only two persons of Aleppo, subjects of the Sultan, who, on returning from Constantinople, whither they had gone for the purpose, brought Russian passports with them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. SKENE.

No. 10.

Acting Consul Zohrab to Lord J. Russell.—(Received September 2.)

(No. 41.)

My Lord, *Bosna Serai, July* 30, 1860.

IN obedience to Sir Henry Bulwer's instructions I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of two despatches I have addressed to his Excellency, in reply to certain questions regarding the condition and wants of the provinces under my Consular jurisdiction.

I should here add that since writing these despatches my French colleague has been authorized by his Government to pay 60*l.* sterling a-year towards the support of the girls' school established in this town.

I have deemed it expedient to forward this despatch through Her Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JAS. ZOHRAB.

Inclosure 1 in No. 10.

Acting Consul Zohrab to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Bosna Serai, July* 22, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Excellency's circular of the 11th June, transmitting a list of questions connected with the condition and administration of the provinces within my Consular jurisdiction.

To these questions I beg to hand the following replies, according to the series of questions:—

1st. A glance at the map of European Turkey will show the importance of the provinces of Bosnia and the Herzegovine to Turkey, both on account of their extent and their geographical position.

Occupying a space of more than 800 square miles, of which a large portion is arable land, bounded on three sides by independent or almost independent States, it is of vital importance that the elements of resistance be found in the provinces, and that the lands be occupied by a contented and loyal people. To what extent these elements may exist, and what danger the Porte has to apprehend from the present condition of the provinces, I shall now endeavour to set forth.

The population of the two provinces may be roughly estimated at 1,200,000, divided as follows:—

Mussulmans	490,000
Catholics	160,000
Belonging to the Greek Church	550,000
	1,200,000

The Mussulmans, like the Christians, belong to the Slave race.

From 1463 to 1850 the Bosniak Mussulmans enjoyed all the privileges of feudalism. Sincerely attached to their religion they respected the Sultan as its head, but as their temporal Sovereign they bore him no affection, and they looked and still look upon the Turks as a separate people.

This statement seems to be contradicted by the fact that the Bosniaks have frequently fought under the banners of the Sultans. Their aid was, however, always conditional, that is, they lent their aid on condition that none of their privileges should be invaded, and that they should continue to govern Bosnia through their own Chiefs. The Porte submitted to these conditions till 1850, when, finding herself sufficiently powerful to assert her authority over these provinces, she sent an army, under Omer Pasha, who subdued the country and introduced reforms.

Thus Bosnia and the Herzegovina may be said to have been but tributary States of the Porte for nearly three centuries.

Omer Pasha exiled the heads of the chief families, who, under the mere nominal superintendence of a Pasha named by the Porte, arbitrarily governed the Sandjaks, and about 100 other individuals implicated in the effort made to resist the Government. He abolished the corvée and the Spahi privileges, and enrolled about 2,000 Bosniaks into the regular army. The Porte did not, however, dare to proceed further; the conscription was abandoned, and the reformed laws were only put partially and occasionally in force. The Mussulmans, keen to detect, at once perceived this weakness, and they have not failed to take advantage of it.

Irritated at the banishment of their Chiefs, irritated at having been subdued by a people they considered inferior to themselves, the Bosniaks long for independence, and if they could overcome their antipathy to the Christians, I have no doubt they would join them to expel the Turks.

The hatred of the Christians towards the Bosniak Mussulmans is intense. During a period of nearly 300 years they were subjected to much oppression and cruelty. For them no other law but the caprice of their masters existed.

In the belief that the direct administration of the Porte would materially ameliorate their position, they were induced, in 1850, to lend a hearty assistance to Omer Pasha, and to their aid must be attributed the rapid success of the Turkish arms. Their hopes were disappointed. That they were benefited by the change there can be no doubt, but the extent did not nearly come up to their expectation. They saw, with delight, the extinction of the Spahi privileges and of the corvée, but the imposition of new and heavy taxes, the gross peculation of the employés sent from Constantinople, and the demands of the army, filled them with disappointment and dismay, and, with these causes for complaint, their previous servile condition was almost forgotten. Their hopes had been raised high to be cruelly disappointed; their pecuniary position was aggravated, while their social position was but slightly improved.

A humiliation they experienced at this time at the hands of Omer Pasha disappointed them greatly, and impressed them with the hopelessness of expecting real benefits from the Turks; they were disarmed, while the Mussulmans who had opposed the Government were permitted to retain their arms.

Oppression cannot now be carried on as openly as formerly, but it must not

be supposed that, because the Government employés do not generally appear as the oppressors, the Christians are well treated and protected. A certain impunity, for which the Government must be rendered responsible, is allowed to the Mussulmans. This impunity, while it does not extend to permitting the Christians to be treated as they formerly were treated, is so far unbearable and unjust in that it permits the Mussulmans to despoil them with heavy exactions. False imprisonments are of daily occurrence. A Christian has but a small chance of exculpating himself when his opponent is a Mussulman.

Christian evidence, as a rule, is still refused.

Christians are now permitted to possess real property, but the obstacles which they meet with when they attempt to acquire it are so many and vexatious that very few have as yet dared to brave them.

Such being, generally speaking, the course pursued by the Government towards the Christians in the capital of the province where the Consular Agents of the different Powers reside and can exercise some degree of control, it may easily be guessed to what extent the Christians, in the remoter districts, suffer who are governed by Mudirs generally fanatical and unacquainted with the law.

The contiguity of the Herzegovina and Bosnia to Dalmatia and Slavonia has naturally brought the two provinces under the notice of Austria. She is intimately acquainted with their resources—she is aware that their possession would give her an influential voice in the East. The disorganized state of the Turkish administration gave her hope that they might be acquired through a revolt of the inhabitants; she was active in preaching a crusade against the Turks; her efforts did not meet with success. She has, however, so far gained her point in rendering the two provinces profitable to her alone.

Russia, as the head of the Slave family, entered into a system of intrigue against the Turks three years ago. Through the Consular and other Agents she has sent to these Provinces, she has been preaching Slave union and Slave freedom; and she is, I have no doubt, secretly organizing a system of resistance among the orthodox Christians which will end either in a general revolt, when good leaders are found, or in Turkey being obliged to retire from the country from inability to support the expense of maintaining her position.

Servia is now joining in the struggle, but I look upon her and upon Montenegro as agents of Russia.

In 1856, Bosnia and the Herzegovina were held by six battalions of Infantry and about 800 Irregulars. In 1858, the discontent evinced by the people, and the hostility of Montenegro, obliged the Porte to raise her forces to seventeen battalions and 5,000 Irregulars. This year the Mussulman population has been called to arms, and the army is raised to twenty battalions.

Even this imposing force cannot maintain order. The frontier districts of the Herzegovina are almost independent; districts hitherto loyal have this year joined the revolt, the Servian frontier is threatened by bands of volunteers, and the Montenegrins pass into the Herzegovina and plunder with impunity.

2. The population of the two Provinces (Bosnia and the Herzegovina) is estimated at 1,200,000, as follows:—Mussulmans, 490,000; Catholics, 160,000; Greeks, &c., 550,000.

3. The Mussulmans are almost all proprietors; the Christians are engaged in trade and in agriculture.

4. Christians are permitted by law to possess landed property, but the difficulties opposed to their acquiring are so great that few have as yet dared to face them. As far as the mere purchase goes, no difficulties are made—a Christian can buy and take possession; it is when he has got his land into order, or when the Mussulman who has sold has overcome the pecuniary difficulties which compelled him to sell, that the Christian feels the helplessness of his position and the insincerity of the Government. Steps are then taken by the original proprietor, or some relative of his, to reclaim the land from the Christian, generally on one of the following pleas: that the original owner not being sole proprietor had no right to sell; that the ground being "merash," or grazing ground, could not be sold; that the deeds of transfer being defective the sale had not been legally made. Under one or other of these pleas the Christian is in nineteen cases out of twenty dispossessed, and he may then deem himself fortunate if he gets back the price he gave. Few, a very few, have been able to obtain justice; but I must say that the majority of these owe their good fortune

not to the justice of their cause, but to the influence of some powerful Mussulman.

Those who possess lands hold them on equal conditions with the Turks.

5. Christians can exercise trades in towns on equal terms with Mussulmans.

6. The Christian peasants in the Christian villages are generally miserably off, working land which does not belong to them; they are but the labourers of the proprietors, who, with rare exceptions, appropriate the lion's share of the harvest. The Mussulman peasants generally work their own land, and having only Government taxes to pay are well to do; but those Mussulmans who labour on the lands of others are as badly off as the Christians.

7. Christian evidence in the Medjlises is occasionally received, but as a rule it is refused, either directly or indirectly, by reference to the Mehkemeh. Knowing this the Christians generally come forward prepared with Mussulman witnesses. The cases in which Christian evidence has been refused are numerous, but it would take time to collect them.

8. The Christian population is socially better off now than it was twenty or ten years ago. The protective laws, though indifferently administered, are still extended over them. Their financial position is worse; twenty years ago, it is true, they had no laws beyond the caprice of their landlords; but their landlords, well aware that to ruin them would be to ruin themselves, allowed them to enjoy a greater share of the fruits of their labour than they can hope to enjoy now after paying their landlords, their taxes, and their priests.

In the Herzegovina I calculate the peasant's share of his crop at 33 per cent.

9. With the exception of the Mussulman religion, all religions receive an equal amount of favour from the Government.

10. Though I have heard assertions to the contrary, I am of opinion that the Christians generally would prefer paying the exemption tax to entering the military service; this tax, however, ought not to be rated on the Christians alone, the Mussulmans should be equally within its influence as long as they do not provide their contingent for the army.

11. To construct a church a firman must first be obtained from Constantinople granting the authority; beyond unnecessary delay in transmitting this, I have not heard of the Government opposing their erection. The Christians are occasionally, but rarely, disturbed in their religious ceremonies.

12. Cases of oppression are frequently the result of Mussulman fanaticism, but for these the Government must be held responsible, for if offenders were punished, oppression would of necessity became rare; but while impunity is allowed, and the Agents of the Porte are themselves frequently oppressors, the Government must be considered the primary cause.

13. There are no native Protestants in these Provinces.

14. The grievances of which the Christians complain must be attributed to the Turkish authorities.

15. A Greek and a Catholic Christian are admitted into each Medjlis to represent Christian interests. Their presence is not of the slightest utility; indeed it is prejudicial to the Christians, as by it they appear to approve acts of injustice against the Christians.

The Medjlises are invariably opposed to progress and good government.

16. An entire remodelling of the Medjlises I consider most urgent. As at present constituted they represent neither the interests of the Provinces, nor the declared views of the Government. The members are selected from among the richest persons of the town in which the Medjlis sits; they are invariably fanatical, narrow-minded, and opposed to progress, possessing no qualifications for their position; they are selected merely on account of the local interest they may possess.

By all classes the Medjlises, as now constituted, are viewed with aversion.

I feel no hesitation in saying that when the Medjlises are properly constructed they will be found useful in promoting good government.

At present a Medjlis combines in itself every branch of the Government; its functions are far too complicated, and were its members guided by the most patriotic and enlightened spirit, they could not get through properly one quarter

of their duties; their attributes should, therefore, be circumscribed, and their functions properly defined.

I venture now to offer an opinion as to the mode in which the Medjlises should be formed.

In the first place, the elective principle should be introduced.

Bosnia is divided into six Sandjaks, governed by Kaimakams.

By the Sandjaks the members of the Medjlis-i-Kebir, or Chief Council of the province, holding its sittings at Bosna-Serai, should be elected.

Nearly two-thirds of the population is Christian. It is therefore absurd to suppose that if ten or twelve Mussulmans are required to represent the interests of the minority, two Christian members are sufficient to represent the interests of the majority. I should therefore propose that each Sandjak nominates two members, one Christian and one Mussulman; and, in the same manner, each Mudirlik of sufficient importance should elect two members to form the Medjlises of the sandjaks.

The members should be elected by the respectable portion of the inhabitants, a process which could very easily be carried out. They should be paid by their constituents salaries adequate to their position; the funds for doing this to be realized by a tax.

The following would, I think, be found a fair scale of remuneration: For the twelve members of the Medjlis of Bosna-Serai (six Mussulmans and six Christians), a salary of 18,000 piastres a-year each. For the Medjlises of the six Sandjak, the members to be paid 10,000 piastres each a-year.

It would be advisable for the Medjlis of Bosna-Serai to have an Agent at Constantinople, through whom it could make representations to the Supreme Government. This Agent might receive a salary of 60,000 piastres a-year.

The entire charge upon the province for maintaining and paying the travelling expenses of members would not exceed 700,000 piastres a-year for Bosnia, equal to a tax of about 1*s.* 1½*d.* per head on the population.

The members should be appointed for a period not exceeding two years; and no member should be eligible a second time without at least one period intervening.

The Governors would naturally be the Presidents of the Medjlises; and, as all measures would be carried by vote, the Presidents would have the casting-vote.

The Medjlises should, however, be quite independent of the Governors, and should be incapable of dismissal during their fixed period of service.

17. I am certainly of opinion that the Medjlises should be deprived of their judicial functions, and tribunals should be created to try criminal and civil suits. A tribunal should also be established for petty suits.

How these tribunals should be composed I hesitate to say. The question is one of such importance and difficulty that I do not feel justified in offering an opinion. I can only say, that if honest, able men could be found at Constantinople to fill the position of Judges and Magistrates, no time should be lost in sending them to establish Courts. The best method of forming these Courts would be gradually developed.

A Criminal Court was established in Mostar in 1857. It was composed of a President sent from Constantinople and a Council of six,—two Greeks, two Catholics, and two Mussulmans.

This tribunal existed for two years. During this period only one or two cases were disposed of, though the prisons were full of persons awaiting trial. This ill-success must be attributed to the inexperience of the President, who was a very young man.

18. Conversion of males to the Mussulman religion is rare. I have not, during my residence in this country, heard of one case of compulsory conversion.

19. The conversion of females is common, but compulsion is not frequently used to effect this; and, when attempted, I must in justice say the Government generally interferes. A case in point occurred only a few days ago. A Turk carried off a young Catholic girl, and endeavoured to compel her to abjure her faith prior to his marrying her. The girl was recovered by the authorities and restored to her home; and Osman Pasha assures me that the Turk will be punished.

In nearly every Mussulman house in these provinces one or two Christian girls are to be found holding the position of servants. They are taken when very young, grow up in the family, by whom they are kindly treated, and they frequently end by voluntarily changing their faith and marrying into the family.

20. In reply to this question, I have only to say that, in addition to the changes already pointed out, honest Governors and honest employés are imperatively required. Possessed of these, the operations of Government would be considerably facilitated: but while corruption is the rule and honesty the exception —while no responsibility exists,—while punishment does not follow crime, all hope of improvement is impossible, and justice is out of the question.

21. In addition to the changes already indicated in the Administration, a thorough revision of the taxes is required. The landlord-and-tenant laws should be revised and enforced; the resources of the country should be developed by the construction of roads and the opening of the port of Klek. The claims of Mussulmans to large tracts of country now lying waste should be strictly examined, and, if found untenable (which, in all probability, would be the case), disallowed, and the lands sold for the benefit of the State. This measure would be very beneficial to the Christians, as many would then gladly become landowners. The functions of the Mehkemeh should be strictly limited to merely religious suits between Mussulmans, and the Hakim or Cadi should not be permitted to have a voice in the Government.

22. Education is very much neglected. In Bosna-Serai there is only one school for girls. It was established two years ago through the influence of the Russian Government. The establishment of schools would certainly prove salutary. The system of education in the boys' schools is very defective,—indeed, the entire teaching consists only of the first rudiments. Government schools would probably be well attended if they were free schools, and if education were entirely separated from religion.

23. I do not venture to offer an opinion on the proposal of naming a Christian Vice-Governor by the side of the Turkish Governor; such an appointment might be beneficial or it might be very disastrous. The reconstruction of the Medjlis on the plan set forth in my answer to the 16th question would, I think, do away with the necessity of such a functionary.

24. Foreign agency has been, and still is, at work to produce discontent and revolt among the Christians, and year by year this is becoming more active and evident.

The best instances I can bring forward in exemplification are, the promulgation of the Russian pamphlet on the Slave question, a translation of which was forwarded by me to your Excellency, and the letters found on the Servian Agents captured in the Herzegovina.

Lastly, I have not heard of subjects of the Porte in these provinces obtaining passports from Greece, and exchanging them for Russian passports, or of obtaining passports from the Agents of other Powers.

I have, &c.

(Signed) JAS. ZOHRAB.

Inclosure 2 in No. 10.

Acting Consul Zohrab to Sir H. Bulwer.

Bosna Serai, July 22, 1860.

Sir,

THE replies embodied in my previous despatch to the questions contained in your Excellency's second circular of the 11th June, expose in a great measure the evils which oppress these provinces, and their remedies. It will now be my duty, in obedience to your Excellency's desire, to make some remarks on these evils, and to offer such suggestions as my experience may have pointed out.

The Hatti-humayoun, I can safely say, practically remains a dead letter. To what extent the Edict of Gulhané has been enforced, I cannot exactly say, as I have not by me a copy of it by which to judge.

Many of the complaints of the Rayahs do not come under that class of grievances which can be reached by the reforms which are required in common by the whole Empire; they are peculiar to these provinces, and require peculiar

treatment. These grievances have been long since brought to the notice of the Porte, and firmans for their immediate removal have been issued, but in no instance have these firmans been acted upon. Thus the Christians have been led to suppose that the Porte is either insincere, and its promises are worthless, or that it has not the power to compel its subordinates to obey its commands.

With persons around them ready to take advantage of every ill-advised act of the Administration, of every promise broken, and of every act of oppression, to strengthen their arguments that the Turks will not grant reforms, and are determined to ruin them, is it surprising that the Christians should think, at length, of the only remedy apparently left to them—an appeal to arms? They see the success which has attended such efforts in Servia, Greece, &c., and they naturally suppose that a like attempt will produce a similar result.

If properly investigated, it would be found that the complaints of the Christians are directed principally against the servants of the Government, and the Medjlises, and to a much less extent against the Mussulmans; the Government would therefore incur but little danger in recognizing the justice of these complaints, and remedying them, as its chief opponents would be its servants. The danger of neglecting them is already apparent.

The complaints against the Mussulmans are not numerous, and the most weighty one regards the unjust exactions of landlords; but against the tax-collectors, the Kaimakams, Mudirs, Medjlises, Cadis, and the military, the cry is bitter and heartfelt.

If Governors and other employés could be found to put in force the regulations which have been issued by the Government of these provinces, I really believe there would be little left to complain of; but to arrive at this happy result is indeed difficult in a country where honesty and patriotism can, unfortunately, hardly be said to exist. Thus I do not hesitate to say that Bosnia and the Herzegovina, which ought to have been now prosperous, contented, and peaceful, have been turned into discontented, disloyal, poverty-stricken provinces through the unworthiness of the Sultan's Lieutenants, and the gross misconduct of inferior employés.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JAS. ZOHRAB.

No. 11.

Consul Campbell to Lord J. Russell.—(*Received September* 11.)

(No. 43.)

My Lord, *Rhodes, August* 29, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to transmit, herewith inclosed, for your Lordship's information, copy of my answer to a circular, under date of the 6th instant, from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople to Her Majesty's Consuls in Turkey.

In the hope that your Lordship will approve of the manner in which I have answered his Excellency's circular, and of my conduct in general, I have, &c.
(Signed) ROBERT CAMPBELL.

Inclosure in No. 11.

Consul Campbell to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Rhodes, August* 29, 1860.

IT was only yesterday that I had the honour to receive your Excellency's circular of the 6th instant, stating your opinion that, on the whole, as a general rule, there is no deliberate intention or desire on the part of the Mussulman population in European Turkey to assault the lives or property of the Christian population; pointing out the duties of a Consul; instructing me to communicate to the Embassy, in the shortest possible space of time, the condition of the district I inhabit, and the conduct and character of the functionaries who are

placed there; the opinions expressed and the line of conduct pursued by other Consuls; and not to fail to point out any cases where I think there is, through foreign agency or otherwise, an evident attempt to promote apprehension, and thereby favour disorder; and, finally, warning me that at this crisis my conduct will be duly watched, and your Excellency's opinion respecting it, whether favourable or the reverse, communicated to Her Majesty's Government.

However much your Excellency may wish me to comply with your instructions, I am convinced it is not your intention I should follow them blindly, or that you intend to fetter my freedom of action. I take leave to observe, that although I have always striven, and shall continue to strive, by a conscientious discharge of my public duties, to merit the good opinion of my superiors, nevertheless as my Consulate is one of those particular places such as your Excellency yourself considers exceptional, to which your general observations may not perfectly apply, and if it unfortunately happens that the line of conduct I must in consequence pursue should not meet your Excellency's approbation, I shall feel myself under the necessity, much as it will grieve me to act otherwise than instructed to do by your Excellency, to carry out fearlessly such measures, firmly believing them to be right, as I may deem necessary for the protection of the lives or property of Her Majesty's subjects. At the same time, I shall follow cheerfully your Excellency's advice to get at the bottom of a story, to encourage my countrymen to try to gain the confidence of the authorities, and otherwise abide by your Excellency's instructions as far as they can be carried out.

As many of the details which your Excellency wishes me to communicate to you have been already given in the despatches addressed by me to your Excellency since the 23rd July last, I shall not repeat their contents, but only add that the line of conduct I have pursued since the beginning of the crisis has been such as to place me in the following position, which can be easily ascertained on a reference to my above-mentioned late correspondence with your Excellency:—

I am on the most friendly terms with all the local authorities. The Governor, although ill, and receiving none of the foreign Consuls, never objected to see me or my Vice-Consul in his harem. He has never refused me anything asked for the public good, but has always readily acted on my advice, and went so far as to declare that he was very glad if Her Majesty's ship "Medina," or some other British vessel of war, should be stationed here always, as he considered her to be a guarantee of safety for himself, and for every Mussulman in the place, against the ill-feeling of the Greek population. On the other hand, the foreign Consuls submit to me their grievances and apprehensions, and beg my assistance when they consider it necessary; while the European and Greek populations look to me for protection in the event of an outbreak on the part of the Mussulman population, or in consequence of some unforeseen event.

I hope, therefore, there is nothing reprehensible in the least in my conduct, as the effects thereof have been of allaying the apprehensions of all parties, and perhaps of securing the tranquillity of this island, under circumstances when the lives and property of the Christian part of the population seemed to be in danger.

In conclusion, I do not believe there is in any European foreign agency, any evident attempts to promote apprehension, and thereby to favour disorder, the line of conduct pursued by my colleagues being perfectly loyal, or among the Turkish authorities; but I do not think that the presence in this island of certain Ottoman subjects of high rank, namely, the late Cadi of Jeddah, who was implicated in the massacre that tookp lace there; of Abdul-Kadder, a Chief who took part in the recent attempted insurrection at Constantinople; and the Imaum of the late Pasha of Beyrout: who, although no direct proofs exist that they are intriguing to bring on a collision between the different races, are strongly suspected, from their former conduct, of so doing.

That the Greek part of the population would not commence a conflict, I am convinced; but I cannot say as much for the Mussulman, especially if the above-mentioned individuals should avail themselves of the presence here of Mussulmans from other parts of Turkey to commence a disturbance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ROBERT CAMPBELL.

No. 12.

Consul Skene to Lord J. Russell.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 51.)

My Lord, *Aleppo, August 23, 1860.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose, according to Sir Henry Bulwer's instructions, a copy of my despatch of August 20, addressed to his Excellency, in reply to his circular of June 11.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. SKENE.

Inclosure in No. 12.

Consul Skene to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Aleppo, August 20, 1860.*

ON the 4th instant I had the honour of forwarding my replies to the Queries contained in your Excellency's circular of June 11, which had reached me only a few days previously, and yesterday I received the other circular bearing the same date. I thus furnished what information I could without being aware of the motives dictating the questions, and without being in possession of the valuable instructions conveyed by the other circular. I shall, therefore, endeavour now to supply the deficiencies of my replies.

Whatever may be the condition of the provinces of Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, which your Excellency informs me is alleged by Russia to be deplorable, it is certain that in Northern Syria nothing of what is described exists. Indeed, in my mind, the almost total absence of crime of any kind is one of the most remarkable features of the country, and is not equalled in any part of Europe. There have been, no doubt, conflicts between sects, such as the massacre of the Christians at Aleppo in 1850, and those of Lebanon and Damascus this summer, but no impartial and dispassionate observer can class such incidents as inherent parts of the existing state of society. They are rather the symptoms of the decline of a supremacy which burst out in occasional recrudescence in proportion as the introduction of another social order becomes felt. These things did not occur before the struggle commenced between absolute predominance and the claim of equal rights. They prove, therefore, that a change is taking root in favour of the Christians, and not merely that they are oppressed by the Turks.

Religious tolerance is professed by the Government authorities in this province, and there is no practical violation of the principle of any importance. It has even been evinced recently in a very striking manner by the Ulema; Mussulmans insulting Christians in the streets having been severely rebuked by them, and some of the most revered Imaums having publicly in the mosques preached the equality before God of all mankind, as proved by quotations from the Koran.

Russia has not as yet acquired much influence at Aleppo, her Consul having hitherto been merely an unpaid native Jew, not enjoying public confidence or esteem. It appears, however, that her attention has now been called to the subject, as a salary has been awarded to the Consul, and instructions have been received by him to have a *Te Deum* celebrated with great pomp in the Greek Church on the Emperor's birthday, and Consular festivities held on that occasion at the expense of his Government. One or two suspicious-looking characters have also appeared here, calling themselves Russian priests, but acting and dressing in a very unclerical fashion. In Syria, moreover, there is no Slavonian population to work upon, and the Greek Church forms too small a minority amongst the Christians to offer a wide field for the labours of political emissaries. Money, valuable presents, rich sacerdotal vestments, and sacred utensils, are constantly received from Russia by her co-religionists here, but her influence does not prevail in this part of the Ottoman dominions, although her wish to increase it, and even to sow discord amongst the different classes of the population, is sufficiently apparent not to admit of a doubt.

Your Excellency expresses the belief that it is an exaggeration to contend that things are in a much worse state than, under the circumstances, might be expected.

This view of the case is fully corroborated by my experience during many years passed in the provinces of both European and Asiatic Turkey, as well as at Constantinople. But, in making this statement, I beg leave to add, that I also conceive a great exaggeration to have existed in the expectations which were entertained.

On the accession of the present Sultan a new era opened for Turkey, and an improved system of government was inaugurated by the Edict of Gulhané. More, I think, was expected from the reform than was warranted by the state of the country, which was generally estimated on the erroneous data supplied by appearances in the capital, while the provinces by no means keep pace with it in the career of improvement. Old vices of the State have been eradicated, immediately under the eye of a well-intentioned Sovereign and Ministry, with the vigilance of foreign Representatives to watch over their efforts, whether it be to assist or to expose weakness. Some advance in the same direction has doubtless been made also in provincial administration, but it is far from meeting the expectations of those who believed in the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire. I consider the reasons of disappointment to be that the provinces were judged by the capital, that the capability of the former to receive reforms was overrated, and that the measures adopted were not in harmony with their actual condition. What has been effected in the way of improvement may not, however, be less than under the circumstances might be expected. For further elucidation of my views on this subject I respectfully beg to refer to my replies to your Excellency's queries, in which I have endeavoured to point out what I regard as the flaws in the existing system of provincial government and their possible remedies.

Your Excellency calls for information on the condition of the Rayah population, and on what points the intentions of the Sultan can be carried out more fully with safety and advantage.

I may add to what I have stated in my replies to your Excellency's queries that I cannot help considering the general estimate of the state of the Christians in Turkey to be as inaccurate now as that of the Mussulmans was twenty years ago.

The political education of the Sultan's Christian subjects has made but little progress, and a violent change would find them sadly in arrear of certain opinions which regard them as being prepared for self-government. Nor do I see that the intentions of the Sultan have much chance of being carried out at all, and either time or opportunity allowed for maturing the advantages of which the seeds were sown by the Edict of Gulhané and the Hatti-Humayoun.

A long residence in the Turkish provinces must produce the conviction that the future existence of their Christian inhabitants will not pass without sudden and fortuitous events which may mould the will of influential Powers to the apparent necessity of the circumstances. Strong measures may be adopted in consequence. But previsions, however sagacious, may remain unrealized, and the most skilful combinations may have effects widely differing from their intention, in a country where the diversities and intricacies of social interests are proverbial. Thus an intestine feud on Mount Lebanon and a fanatical outburst at Damascus produce an intervention. France sends the principal land force. The Christian population is divided and sub-divided into religious denominations, inveterately hating each other. The French have an unmasked and exclusive sympathy for the Roman Catholics. The priesthood of that persuasion maintains an organized persecution of the Greek, Armenian, Jacobite, and Protestant churches. These communities will, therefore, be protected, it is true, from the Mussulmans, who favour no Christian sect in particular, but they will be exposed to all the overbearing arrogance of the French and of those whom they especially protect. The Mussulmans, too, will be exasperated against the Christians by the kind of protection conferred on a portion of them, and those Christians will irritate them still more by their insolence when thus protected. Disunion in the country will be more firmly established. Instead of helping the Christian population to qualify itself for future beneficial changes, protection, such as will probably be exercised, must render it less fit than ever to hold a more advantageous position.

As far as material prosperity is concerned, Syria will certainly gain by a foreign intervention. Great Britain will also derive considerable profit therefrom. Trade will increase with the introduction of a new element of civilization, requiring a larger amount of importation. But Syria is not like Greece whose population, without having augmented, draws twenty times the amount of manufactured goods from England than the Pashalic of Roumelia and Morea did, and can derive the full benefits of the development of commerce by a perfect unity of faith and nationality. Syria, on the contrary, will become the prey of religious factions and national enmities, which must impede all progress.

Besides this, the French are universally detested in Syria by the Mussulmans; and I fear that their contemptuous and aggressive deportment will, when their influence becomes paramount, produce conflicts with the Turkish authorities as well as with the Mahometan population, and embroil also the functionaries of other powers in endless difficulties; which results must entail certain injury on the interests of the Christians in general, including even those whom the French especially Protect. Oriental nations are apt to be impressed by dictatorial demeanour, and certainly nothing is omitted here to convey the desired impression. French exigencies are usually yielded to by the Turkish authorities, but the humiliation of doing so rankles within, and finds a vent in chicanery towards the Christians, and the other European functionaries whose less imperious conduct is ascribed to weakness.

An incidental event will, therefore, in all probability, give an unfavourable turn to the condition of the Christians in Syria, and render them more liable to suffer detriment in the next crisis awaiting them.

It may be objected that absolute preservation of life requires an intervention: to this I would reply that it is so, when men like Khorsheed Pasha of Beyrout, and Ahmed Pasha of Damascus, are entrusted with the government of Provinces; but at Aleppo, where an equal, if not a greater, likelihood of Mussulman violence existed, the dictates of common prudence and fidelity were followed, and no insurrectionary movement has taken place.

I feel persuaded that the best prospect for the Christian population of Turkey is to be found in the amelioration of Turkish provincial administration, more particularly as regards the selection of Governors and reform of the Councils, with a complete cessation of special protection by Consular authorities, and great forbearance on the part of Europe towards the Porte on any emergencies which may arise.

Without being too sanguine on the subject, it appears to me that it would be no very arduous task to promote the prosperity of Syria. With security of life and property for the agricultural classes, and the establishment of justice in the towns, it would soon become one of the most flourishing of the Sultan's possessions. Perfect salubrity of climate, a great extent of fertile plains, a sufficient number of rivers and smaller streams for irrigation, with a patient, frugal, and industrious peasantry, an active and intelligent trading community, leave little wanting to confer on Syria a degree of welfare hitherto unknown. A rational mode of treating the important question of the nomadic tribes; the repression of corruption and extortion on the part of the local magnates; the admission of the Christians to a larger share in the administration of public affairs; the purification and reorganization of the tribunals; the encouragement of education; and a more equitable policy on the part of some European Powers and their Agents, seem to me reforms of a practicable realization, and their beneficial effects cannot be called into question. In my replies to your Excellency's queries I ventured to enumerate the measures which I humbly consider calculated to attain those ends.

I am sure your Excellency wishes to have opinions frankly stated, in order that they may be duly sifted, and appreciated according to their merits and demerits; and I therefore hope I may be held excused if I have too freely given utterance to these crude notions on a subject the consideration of which may not strictly form part of a Consul's attributes.

With respect to the Provincial Councils, on which your Excellency desires that the Consuls should furnish the results of their observation, I have nothing to add to the remarks contained in my despatch of the 4th of August.

I presume that the final instruction in your Excellency's circular, namely,

to give information to the Grand Vizier on his tour of inspection, will equally apply to Fuad Pasha in Syria, and I shall be ready to fulfil it in so far as lies within my power.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. SKENE.

No. 13.

Vice-Consul Meyers to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Rustchuk, July 2, 1860.*

THERE is a general belief prevailing here that the Russian emissaries who are said to abound in this province, besides the various other means they employ in creating amongst the Bulgarians an ill-feeling against the Turks, have a certain number of brigands in their pay, whom they send about in all places to trouble the country; and the acts of violence committed by them are, by certain ill-informed or bad-intentioned journals, interpreted as oppression of the Christians by the Turks.

It cannot certainly be denied that it is indispensably necessary for the Porte to reform the existing administration in this province, but it is evident that her neighbour is using various machinations in order to raise in Europe a crusade against the Turks, and ultimately to derive from it either territorial or other advantages.

The Grand Vizier, during his stay in this town, caused all the principal inhabitants of the various classes and denominations to appear before him, and asked them to bring any complaint they may have to make either verbally, or, if they were afraid of being denounced to the local authorities, to do so in writing, assuring them that their communications would be received with the greatest secresy.

I am told that upwards of 100 individuals availed themselves of the liberty thus given to them by his Highness, and addressed to the Grand Vizier letters of various descriptions, but not one of them was of a nature as to indicate that there existed any ill-feeling amongst the Turks against the Christian population, or any tendency, on the part of the Osmanlis, to oppress the Rayahs. They were different kinds of complaints against private individuals, such as come daily in any country before any magistrate, and that these have remained unattended to till now, is entirely owing either to the unsettled character of the Pasha or the ill composition of the Medjlis, perhaps to both.

His Highness has done everything that could be done during the thirteen days he remained in this town. An hour after his arrival he was engaged in investigating the state of the police, and where he found it necessary he introduced such reforms as are likely to render that branch of the administration more efficient for the future.

Four Turks and one Bulgarian have been tried, convicted of murder, and executed during his Highness's stay here, which produced a favourable impression upon the people in general, seeing that measures were taken to rid the country of these troublesome fellows.

In every town where he passed he caused all the employés of the Government to appear before him and spoke to them in language which made every one tremble; and few of them have been spared from being called robbers, thieves, and other like expressions: but what most astonished them was to hear him say that, in the eyes of the Sultan, there was no difference between Turk and Christian. "I have the power to hang or to send you to the galleys, and I know that you are guilty; but I spare you this time—take care for the future. Woe to him against whom I shall receive any complaint!" With these and many other similar warnings he sent them away, admonishing them, at the risk of their lives and properties, to behave themselves well in future.

With regard to the abuses carried on by the farmers of the revenues, and which, I may say, was the principal, perhaps the only, burden under which both peasantry and proprietor were groaning, as your Excellency enjoined me to communicate my ideas frankly to the Grand Vizier, I have not hesitated to bring before his Highness's notice the manner in which these individuals were

carrying on their trade. On their arrival in the district they at once endeavoured to bribe the Kaimakam or Mudir, and, strange to say, they invariably succeed in that. Once this effected they proceed to the different villages, entering into every house, and writing down the number of cattle every peasant possesses, and generally as well the numbers of those who possess neither power nor influence to defend themselves, never hesitating to put down twelve head when he finds only eight. Six weeks or two months later he again makes his appearance to receive payment. The poor peasant, when he hears the number for which he has to pay, begins by remonstrating, but all his lamentations are in vain—it is written down, and the Kaimakam or Mudir enjoins him to pay it.

His Highness told me that he would pay particular attention to that; and I am now given to understand that he did so.

Henceforth, there will be a sort of small tribunal established in every village, consisting of four members,—the Priest of the village, the Muchtar, the Tchaoush, and the Tchorbadji. These four individuals (the first and last being always Christians) will have to accompany the tax-gatherer or farmer of the revenues to the house of the peasant, where the number of the cattle, &c., will be written down in a book, attested by the signatures of these four officials and by the peasant himself. It is therefore to be hoped that such control over the farmers of the revenues will put an end to one of the greatest evils the peasantry were suffering from till now.

Whether the reforms his Highness is now introducing will produce a permanent good in the province will depend entirely upon the choice of the Porte of the person to be placed at the head of the Government here. Let her put a Governor with liberal ideas, great energy, and of a pure character, and the labours of the Grand Vizier will have the desired effect. If, again, the Government is to remain in the hands where it is now, I fear that, in a short time, every improvement which his Highness is now endeavouring to introduce into the administration will be buried in oblivion, and the ancient system brought once more into action. And here, again, I considered it my duty to tell the Grand Vizier, that although I thought the present Governor to be a most honourable and worthy old gentleman, yet, to my idea, he did not possess the qualities required in an administrator of one of the most important provinces of Turkey in Europe.

His Highness condescended to agree with me entirely on that point, and told me, in confidence, that he had made up his mind not to leave him here. "But," said he, "if I send him away now, they will appoint, at Constantinople, another to replace him, and perhaps the choice will fall upon one much worse than he is. It is better, therefore, that he should remain till I get back; and, as I have now seen sufficiently of the country to know what sort of person is required to watch over the proceedings of the employés, who have sunk into a degree of depravity that only an iron sceptre can awake them to a sense of honesty and uprightness, I shall take care to send them such an individual."

I hope to succeed in obtaining a copy of the original Memorandum of the various reforms to be introduced in the province, left by the Grand Vizier with the Pasha for immediate execution, and which I shall transmit by next Saturday's post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) S. MAYERS.

No. 14.

Consul Holmes to Lord J. Russell.—(Received August 22.)

(No. 45.)

My Lord, *Bosna Serai, August* 10, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that I find the position of affairs in this province to be most unsatisfactory, the opinion being generally prevalent that, without some powerful intervention, Bosnia and Herzegovina may soon witness scenes similar to those which have lately horrified Europe in Syria.

Reports are continually arriving here of massacres of Christians in different places, which, if untrue, serve at least to show the existing excitement and alarm.

On the night of the 6th the Ferik Pasha commanding the troops here left this suddenly by post, taking with him his son and a few attendants. The Vali Pasha declared that he had merely proceeded to the Servian frontier to inspect the troops and defensible positions in that direction, as several inroads had lately been made by bodies of Servian volunteers. This service, however, did not seem to call for a sudden and, as it were, secret, departure at midnight, and the explanation of the Pasha was looked upon as an evasion of the truth. The next day a rumour was spread abroad that some twenty Christians had been massacred at Gradiska, in the district of Banialuka, by the Turkish population. This excited great alarm here. The authorities were said to have denied the truth of the report, but its coincidence with the departure of the Ferik threw suspicion on their sincerity. My colleagues here considered that it was highly important that we should be truly informed on the subject, and official applications were made from all the Consulates to the Pasha to learn the truth. His Excellency was solemnly warned as to the responsibility he would incur in deceiving us in a matter which might, perhaps, involve the lives of thousands; but he insisted that the report was entirely an invention. He manifested, however, much uneasiness as to the future. The details of the late horrible occurrences in Syria are adding to the excitement already prevailing. Inroads by volunteers from Servia are constantly repeated; and the Pasha says that a force larger than hitherto collected is being mustered on the frontier. Mussulmans and Christians are discontented, and the latter alarmed: the troops are in arrears, and, for other causes, are hardly to be depended on. And when, on the occasion of my official visit to the Pasha, I asked his Excellency if he had any hope that the Turkish Government would be able to restore tranquillity to these countries, he shook his head and declared that matters would be much worse before they could be better.

I believe that my colleagues of France, Russia, and Austria are all writing to their respective Governments as to the propriety of some arrangement with Turkey to secure this province from the disasters which have happened in Syria.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. R. HOLMES.

No. 15.

Consul Campbell to Lord J. Russell.—(Received August 27.)

(No. 39.)

My Lord, *Rhodes, August* 13, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have addressed, this day, to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, reporting the measures of precaution adopted at Scio to preserve the public tranquillity in that island.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ROBERT CAMPBELL.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Consul Campbell to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Rhodes, August* 13, 1860.

MR. VICE-CONSUL CHARLES BILIOTTI, of Scio, writes to me, under date of the 8th instant, that the Christian part of the population there, in consequence of the recent events in Syria, were under the apprehension that the massacres which took place in the island in the years 1821 and 1829 would be renewed, or that the Bazaar, which is built of wood, would be burnt and plundered as in 1850.

Mr. Biliotti having represented the agitated state of the public mind to the Kaimakam of Scio, he gave orders, in conjunction with the Medjlis, that a certain number, chosen from among the most respectable Turks and Christians of the different Esnafs (Guilds), should patrol the streets during the night for

the public safety; that the Topdjis (Militia), who are mutinous, and have committed some disorders, should be kept within the Castle; and that the price of provisions, which is 50 per cent. higher than at Smyrna, should be lowered to the same rate by a tariff.

These measures have been the means of preserving the tranquillity of the island.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ROBERT CAMPBELL.

No. 16.

Consul-General Longworth to Lord J. Russell.—(Received September 3.)

(No. 33.)

My Lord, *Belgrade, August* 26, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to transmit, herewith inclosed to your Lordship, the copy of a despatch addressed by me to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, and dated Belgrade, August 23, 1860; together with the copy of Mr. Rickett's General Report on the administration of the Province of Nisch, and the visit of the Grand Vizier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. A. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 1 in No. 16.

Consul-General Longworth to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Belgrade, August* 23, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to transmit, herewith inclosed to your Excellency, the copy of a General Report from Mr. Ricketts on the Province of Nisch and visit of the Grand Vizier.

It will be unnecessary for me to solicit your Excellency's attention to the facts and statements contained in this Report, or to the strong and truthful picture it presents of the misrule prevailing in a Turkish province, which, I should in justice add, was worse administered than any that has yet fallen under my observation; but the most important inference to be drawn from it is that, even amidst the worst administrative abuses, no single circumstance can be elicited which can serve in the slightest way as a justification of the charges brought forward as to oppression of the Christians by Prince Gortchakoff.

I take the liberty of suggesting to your Excellency that Mr. Ricketts, who is not a salaried officer of the Government, should, in addition to the expenses of his journey, receive some remuneration for the trouble he has been at in furnishing this Report. The amount I must leave to your Excellency.

Mr. Fitzio, who accompanied Mr. Ricketts as dragoman, and who for that purpose absented himself from Belgrade, where he is engaged in mercantile pursuits, is entitled, I think, to 1*l.* per diem.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. A. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 16.

Mr. Ricketts to Consul-General Longworth.

Sir, *Nisch, August* 11, 1860.

THE Pashalic of Nisch contains the Provinces of Nisch, Samakov, and Kustendil.

The Sandjak or Province of Nisch is divided into six kazas, or districts, and contains a population of about 500,000 inhabitants, of whom one-sixth may be reckoned as Mussulmans. The population of Samakov and Kustendil are chiefly Christians.

The general administration of this province, under Zeinel Pasha, was exceedingly bad. He himself appears to have been indolent and venal, and the management of everything was entrusted to his Kyaha. The Medjlis, or Council, over which he presided, was as corrupt as himself, and the Christian members vied with the Mussulmans, even if they did not surpass them, in acts of bribery and extortion. Christian evidence, apparently, held no weight whatever. No Police Court existed, and a Court of Commerce was not thought necessary.

At Scharkoi, Berkowatz, Leskowatz, at Dubnitza and Jbuna, the same state of things existed. The Mudirs of these places and their Councils seemed to have followed the example set them at the capital of the province. In short, the affairs of this Pashalic seem to have been strangely neglected.

It is, however, worthy of remark, that, while the condition of this province has been retrograding, that of the adjoining Province of Sofia has been progressing; and this may be attributed, in a great extent to the fact that Nisch was governed by a Pasha who was negligent and corrupt, while Sofia was governed by Hassan Jehsin Pasha, a man noted for energy of character and integrity.

Let us direct our attention for a moment to the district of Scharkoi, in the Province of Nisch. Here we find that the Mudir or Sub-Governor, Kokalo, and Risto, two of the Christian notables, and the Bishop himself, were all combined to fleece the community at large. At the head of these, however, was the Bishop, who, not content with the numerous fees granted him by his Church, endeavoured to enrich himself by taking a part in the iltizam, or farming the tithe of that district. Were this all, one could only accuse him of a too earnest desire to amass for himself worldly goods; but, unfortunately, there are other complaints which have been brought against him, and, I believe, these have been proved in most instances; they are, however, of a more serious nature, for it is reported that nearly all his servant-maids were debauched by him, and in one instance, after the fruit of his iniquity had been brought to light and destroyed, the matter was referred by the people to Zeinel Pasha, but the gold of the Bishop prevailed on the conscience of the Pasha, and the affair was hushed up.

I have perhaps, entered too much into detail as regards the character of this dignitary of the Church, but it is evident from this, that, if the Greek Church at Constantinople wishes to hold her own in these provinces, she must also enter upon the work of reform, and that, too, without delay, for I fear there are many of the Greek clergy whose character would not bear too close a scrutiny.

Although in the other districts of this province the same misrule and confusion appears to have existed, yet I have not heard of any one instance in which a Christian boy or girl has been forced to embrace Islamism.

I do not mean, by the above, to assert that there have been no cases of proselytism; there have been two at Leskowatz, in which two girls became Mussulman, but on examining whether these girls changed their religion voluntarily or involuntarily, we find that it was entirely voluntarily, and they had every opportunity given them by the Turkish authorities of thinking the matter well over. After they had declared they wished to embrace Islamism, their parents were summoned; they remained with their children for three days, and when the girls could not be prevailed upon to alter their opinions, the whole of the parties concerned were sent by Hussein Aga, the Mudir, to Nisch, where they were again examined, before the Municipal Council; they still persisted in changing their religion, and are now married to Turks. The whole of this affair was repeated to me exactly in the way I have related it, both at Nisch, by a Christian member of the Medjlis, or Council, and at Leskowatz, by Hussein Aga, the Mudir, himself.

When it is said that the Mussulman religion is constantly forced upon the Christians, the following question might, perhaps, be asked: How is it we hear it so seldom asserted that a boy has been compelled to become a Mussulman? The fact is, that most of the Christian girls of this country are compelled to work to an advanced age, not in the house, as one would suppose, but in the fields, where just as much labour is performed by the women as the men; they are also badly clothed, and but little cared for: whereas if they marry Muasulmans the hard labour ceases, and they are then in comparatively easy circumstances. It is, therefore, in no way astonishing if Christian girls run away from their homes, wish to change their religion, and become married to Mussulmans.

There have also been some cases of rape (and where in the world are there not ?), but in the cases I am about to mention religion had nothing whatever to do with the fact. One took place at Berkowatz, where a village girl was assaulted by two soldiers, and violated; the delinquents decamped, and were never heard of. The other was an assault committed by two soldiers on a married woman, in a village near Nisch; they were taken, tried, imprisoned for three months, and received fifty lashes.

I much doubt whether there are more cases of rape in this country than there are even in many countries in Europe. One is only surprised that, with the present state of society, there is not a far more frequent occurrence of this crime.

But it is not against rape, or theft, or crimes like these, that we hear of many complaints. The chief and real cause of complaint, and the chief source of evil to this province, has been the exactions of the Iltizamjis during the last three years. I was told by the villagers that, where Rangel the Iltizamji (a Christian, by-the-bye) had passed, the very grass had been burnt up under his feet; and, indeed, the extortions and exactions of this scoundrel baffle all description. The present farmer of the tithe at Leskowatz, an Armenian, told me that Rangel had taken more than twice the amount of tax he was entitled to on the pigs; and, so great has been the oppression in the collection of that tax, that the trade in that animal has greatly diminished.

In the same way that this district and Leskowatz suffered from the cruelties committed by Rangel, the Christian, so did Scharkoi and Berkowatz suffer from the oppression of Dulep Aga, the Mussulman Iltizamji.

Up to the present moment, August 8th, the tithe of these districts has not been finally sold, and the whole of the crops of wheat, barley, and hay, that have been cut for some weeks past, are still lying on the ground. The owner has not the right to house them until the tithe-farmer makes his appearance; consequently there is a loss not only to the villager, but also to the farmer of the tithe and the Government. At present the law is that ten piastres should be paid, as a tax, on every pig after he has attained the age of one year; it would be far wiser if three piastres were paid on all pigs, without reference to age. Twenty per cent. tax on wine—as this tax is collected at present from all persons, without any regard as to whether their wine is grown for their own consumption or sale, it cannot tend to promote the revenue for any lengthened period. If this law continue the cultivation of the grape will diminish, and, with a loss of production, there must naturally be a falling off in the revenue. But, with the exception of these two taxes, I do not think it can be urged that the taxes imposed by the Porte on its subjects are in any way oppressive. Let us see what is the amount of tax, direct and indirect, to which both Christians and Mussulmans are subject in the district or kaza of Nisch. I have only alluded to the kaza of Nisch itself, inasmuch as from my short stay at that place I have had no time to collect any accurate information relative to the other twelve districts of this Pashalic. I may, however, here remark, from such information as I was enabled to obtain, that there is no great difference between the rates paid in this and the other districts.

The total population of this kaza may be reckoned at 88,000 inhabitants, of whom 20,000 Christians and 2,000 Mussulmans are supposed to be subject to the payment of taxes. The total amount paid by the Christians for "yeni askeryie," or exemption from military service, is 600,000 piastres; this therefore gives an average direct tax of 30 piastres for each person.

The total amount paid by the Christians on pigs is 200,000 piastres, hence an indirect tax of 10 piastres each.

Now, the average amount of indirect taxes, paid jointly by both Christians and Mussulmans, is as follows:—

	Piastres.
Property Tax	340,000
Tithe	1,200,000
Sheep	300,000
	1,840,000

So that for the kaza or district of Nisch, the Turks pay an indirect tax of 83 piastres each per annum, and the Christians an indirect sum of 93 piastres and a direct sum of 30 piastres; but it must be remembered that the Christians

are entirely exempt from military service, and would rather pay four times the amount they do now than be compelled to furnish their due proportion of recruits for the army. I have not mentioned the amount collected for the wine, inasmuch as it was impossible to obtain any accurate data upon the subject. The possession of any information upon this point would not materially affect the above calculation.

Such, in fact, is the average amount of taxation imposed by the Turkish Government on this district, and such is the average amount which would fall on each person supposing they were all rated equally.

The greatest part, however, of these taxes are derived from property, and if each person was rated according to his means, it is clear that the poorer classes would, indeed, be subject to a very slight taxation.

But, although such is clearly the intention of the Government (for it has left the method of collection of both the property-tax and the "yeni askeryé," or exemption from military service, entirely in the hands of the people themselves, merely stating the gross amount it requires from each village), yet we find that, in many places, the Christian notables have greatly abused the power entrusted to them, and the burden is often shifted from the shoulders of the rich to those of the poor.

Thus it appears that the Government has acted fairly and liberally to all classes, but the people are not just towards one another.

There are 800 zabtics or police in this Sandjak or province, but they are paid so indifferently that one cannot expect them to be altogether free from committing acts of injustice.

There are thirteen Mudirs or sub-Governors in the Pashalic: their pay varies from 500 to 1,500 piastres a month. Each of these functionaries have to administer justice and regard the affairs of some 80,000 people: their duties, if properly performed, are most arduous. What the Pasha is to the province so is the Mudir to the district. He is required to entertain numerous travellers, and to keep up such a style as is inseparable from the office of every Oriental employé. How then, may it be asked, is it possible that so much can be exacted from a person who, in nine cases out of ten, does not receive more than 1,000 piastres per month? To be honest, under such circumstances, is almost an impossibility.

I have hitherto touched upon the former administration of this province; I will now enter, as shortly as possible, into an examination of the general state and condition of the people themselves.

Firstly, then, as regards the Mussulman classes. These are composed of Beys, merchants, and Essnafs. The Beys are becoming poorer every year, and their property is gradually falling into the hands of the Christians; the merchants are not nearly so numerous or so rich as the Christians of the same class. The Essnafs inhabit the large towns and form the most numerous part of the Mussulman population. From the districts of Nisch, Urkup, and Leskowatz, the Porte would have no difficulty in obtaining 12,000 Irregulars. Such a force, in case of necessity, might be of the greatest advantage to the regular troops now stationed at Nisch.

Secondly, as regards the Christian population, I will divide this into the commercial and agricultural classes.

Nisch itself is the high road through which the merchandize from Roumelia passes into Servia and Germany. Large quantities of English cotton goods come here from Trieste viâ Belgrade. Skins and flax are the chief articles of export from this and the adjoining districts. Hence there are many favourable opportunities for trading, and most of the people inhabiting the towns are, so to say, in a flourishing condition, but their wealth is accumulated more by pilfering the villagers that it is by honest trade.

As regards the agricultural classes.—The soil in this part of the country is exceedingly rich; the chief produce consists in Indian corn and flax. The following is the land tenure of the districts of Nisch, Urkup, and Leskowatz:—The tenant is obliged to sow 20 okes of grain:* he is also compelled to cut the crop arising from this quantity of seed, and to house it for the benefit of the landlord. In addition to this, he is bound to give up one-ninth of his own crops to the landlord, who, by-the-bye, finds him neither house nor seed, but often advances him the means of purchasing his ploughs, oxen, and farming neces-

* Twenty okes of Indian corn covers two acres of land.

saries. The landlord pays the "weirgu" or property-tax: he has not, however, the power of ousting the tenant. When this tenure is compared with that of Monastir and other places, where the landlord finds, it is true, house and seed, but the tenant pays half the crop and can be ousted at the will of the owner, it is clear that land is here held on a very favourable tenure. But, with all this, the agriculture here is, I think, far inferior to that in other parts of Roumelia. We are naturally led to ask ourselves what is the reason of this. I will endeavour, therefore, to explain the various disadvantages under which the agriculturist has been for some time labouring. Firstly, the villagers have been exposed to the exactions of the tithe-collectors; secondly, the country has been suffering from bad crops for three successive years; and, lastly, there has been a continual lawsuit and agitation between landlord and tenant, which has tended, as much as anything possibly could do, to impoverish both parties. The only people that have derived any benefit from this movement have been the Christian notables of Nisch. I will not enter into the details of the legal rights of landlords or tenants, as your own report of last year was sufficiently explicit to clear up any supposed difficulties on this point. I will therefore merely state, that these disputes originated at Leskowatz; that some eighty villages near Nisch broke out into rebellion some two years ago, and refused to pay any rent whatever. Further, that although some landlords had, in some instances, abused their rights, yet such has been by no means the rule; and, as a proof of this, I have to bring to your notice the case of the village of Moluschta, who brought an action before the Grand Vizier against Aiwaz Bey for the sum of 1,500 piastres. Their statement was to the effect that when Aiwaz Bey, some years ago, had held the Iltizam of his own village, he had permitted several of his people to remain there for a number of days: that they had lived at the expense of the inhabitants and paid nothing. This circumstance was thoroughly investigated; and it was proved by the villagers' own admission that the Bey had, in reality, remitted them at that period a portion of their rent equivalent to the expenses claimed.

As the rebellion of which I have just spoken, and which took place some two years ago, was clearly a combined movement, it would be as well to examine into the probable causes of this outbreak. In order to obtain more accurate information on this subject, I took the trouble of passing a few days in visiting some of the neighbouring villages, and at Brestolza I obtained the following information from the villagers themselves:—That they had been told by certain people that they ought on no account to pay their "gospodarlik," or rent; that the lands did not belong to the present landlords, but to the Rayahs themselves; and that if they took the trouble to go to Constantinople, they would be enabled to eject their present owners, and obtain possession of the land themselves. The villagers then said, "This is all very well, but where shall we get money sufficient to pay our expenses to Constantinople?"

The advocates of the ejectment system—a certain Krainili, a Christian member of the Council of Nisch; another Christian notable, by name Swetan, and the Priest of Leskowatz, by name Jacon, guaranteed the money required: 27,000 piastres were advanced, at an enormous rate of interest; and several of them, with a certain Spetko at their head, started for Constantinople. They were soon compelled to quit the capital, and Spetko, their representative, was left to conduct the process. No long time elapsed before a courier reached them from Spetko: he informed them that their cause had been gained,—that all he required was some remuneration for his trouble, and that he would soon make his appearance among them. On his arrival, several villages went out to meet him, guns were fired, great rejoicings were made, and four baskets of gold were given him as a present. Spetko then took his leave and went to Constantinople. Some short time afterwards a priest also arrived: he read them a firman granting them the lands in question. The priest also departed laden with gifts; but neither Spetko nor the priest have since been heard of, and the villagers now find that the whole was a trick and they were the dupes.

I must here mention that large sums of money were advanced, or rather lent, by the Christian notables of Nisch, Leskowatz, and Wlasitiniza to many of the villages with the view to assist them in ousting the landlords. Their immediate object in making such a loan was to enable them to have a lien upon the property; and there was a chance, although remote, that, by lying and intriguing, the Mussulman landlords might be ejected, and then they, and not

the peasantry, would have stepped into possession of the vacated lands; for it is not likely that the villagers could have discharged these debts, or that the others would have allowed them to retain this property when they could not even pay the interest on the amounts borrowed. The end of the whole of this has been that the peasantry are irretrievably in debt; that they have to pay heavy rates of interest for the sums advanced; that they are now almost persuaded that they are the real proprietors of the soil, and, in many instances, refuse to pay their rent; that the lands are badly cultivated and the landlords impoverished,—in short, there is a general restlessness among the people of the Nisch district, and the Christian notables, the concocters of the scheme, are the only gainers. Hence we have a variety of causes all tending to impede agriculture and impoverish the agricultural classes. G. Krainili, the most active agent of this movement, is now in prison, having been found guilty of various acts of peculation. Jacon, the priest, has left some time ago for Constantinople, and Swetan Chorbaji is since dead.

But, although the springs of this disorder have been removed from the scene, there are many others who still take an interest in prolonging hostilities, and, although these are buoyed up by the hope of one day becoming the lords of the soil themselves, yet, from their pertinacity in clinging to a point which has been already given against them by the Government, it would appear as if they were in some way subject to the pressure of foreign influence; and, when we consider that the frontier of Servia adjoins the district of Nisch, that a thorough hatred of landlords and general equality are the principles advocated in that country, that the merchants here are many of them intermarried with Servians, that they are constantly journeying to Jagodin, Kruschewatz, and other places in Servia, and that there is, in short, a community of interests between the people of Nisch and those of Servia, it is evident that Milosch and his agents can find no great difficulty in disseminating intrigue throughout the kaza or district of Nisch.

Let us now direct our attention to certain events which have lately taken place on the Servian frontier.

During the last three weeks, a band of eighteen brigands, divided into three companies, have been wandering about this district. Their chief is a Servian, and they are joined by two or three Rayahs from a Rayah village situated close to the Servian boundary, but the greatest part of them are from Servia. A few days ago a Christian boy was captured by one of these bands at the village of Schakofza, taken into the hills, and a ransom demanded for him from his father of 32,000 piastres. The police were immediately dispatched in pursuit of the brigands, surprised them, and killed two; four of them escaped, of whom two were wounded. The boy was released, and brought to the Grand Vizier at Nisch, where he made the following statement: "That the brigands in question went, generally speaking, by Mussulman names, although they were really Servians, and not Mussulmans; that he had heard them say they had received orders to kill a certain number of people near Nisch; that they would also kill his father, and they could not take a ransom for him."

The boy was 16 years old, and delivered his statement, as far as I was able to ascertain, in a straightforward manner. As a proof, however, that his evidence was to be relied on, a written list of fifteen Christian names was found on the person of one of the robbers who was killed, and two of the people whose names were mentioned therein have been actually murdered. One of them was a Rayah at the village of Lonnitza, and the other a Christian notable in the village of Dol; both of these Rayahs were known to have lived on friendly terms with the Turks.

Until some of the band are apprehended, there is, of course, no exact proof as to the source from which the brigands received their orders, but still the matter is worth investigation. If this was a band of robbers who were wandering about with the object of plunder only, it is not likely that they would have carried with them a written list of their victims. Hence we may suppose they were hired assassins; and the Chief of the Police informed me that the boy had stated that he had heard the brigands say they were paid.

The object for which they were hired appears to me to have been as follows: to cause a general belief that the Mussulmans were constantly killing the Christians, and to create disturbances throughout those very districts which the Grand Vizier was visiting, so that it might hereafter be said that even the presence of the Grand Vizier was not sufficient to prevent disorder and murder. Be this as

it may, the same secret agency that has directed bands of robbers to enter Bosnia from Servia, and furnished them with Russian standards; the same policy that, in Servia, stoops to any method, however base and degraded it may be, provided that it can increase the hatred between Mussulmans and Christians, has most probably directed these banditti to invade the district of Nisch, and has furnished them with the means of committing the most cold-blooded assassination.

The Russian policy acts in a direct manner from Widdin upon Turnova, Gabrova, Plewna, and that part of Bulgaria; and, in an indirect manner, from Servia upon Nisch and the adjoining provinces.

Servia is guaranteed against any armed movements on the part of the Porte: is she, on that account, to be allowed to continue to spread the flames of revolt throughout the Turkish provinces adjoining her frontier? If such a line of conduct on the part of Servia be suffered to exist any length of time, I do not see how the Porte can (in these provinces, at least) enter upon and carry out that work of reform which is now so seriously demanded of her by the Powers. It is, indeed, surprising that a province which has suffered so much during the infamous administration of Zeinel Pasha, and which has been the scene of foreign intrigue for so long a period, should be found to be, generally speaking, in so tranquil a state. The reason of this, however, may be attributed to the total indifference, or rather unwillingness, of the greatest part of the population to change their present condition. It is fortunate for the Porte that Zeinel Pasha has been, at last, removed; that a man like Osman Pasha has been appointed as Vali; and that the Grand Vizier has been sent to redress those grievances which demand the most immediate attention.

His Highness entered Nisch on the 30th of July. He was received with the greatest loyalty and respect by all parties. The whole of the shops of the town were closed, and not only the Mussulmans, but the Bishop, the clergy, the Christian school, the Christian notables, and, indeed, the whole population, went two miles out of the town to welcome the Representative of His Majesty the Sultan; petitions were even presented to him on the road. I must say, that the greatest Sovereign in Europe could hardly have been received with greater enthusiasm on the part of his subjects than was the Grand Vizier that day at Nisch. The people seem to have entertained the idea that their complaints would not be made in vain, and in this they were not mistaken, as will be seen from the sequel of this Report. I shall, therefore, now draw your attention more especially to the reforms which his Highness the Grand Vizier has lately carried out during his tour through this province.

The first order issued by His Highness was to dissolve the whole of the old Councils and to have new ones established; this was, indeed, a most necessary measure, as these Councils could be regarded not as courts of justice, but as dens of thieves. Accordingly, at Widdin, Berkowatz, and Scharkoi, the members of the old assemblies were dismissed, and new ones elected in their stead. No one has been prevented bringing forward his complaints: no less than 1,500 petitions were presented by the inhabitants of Scharkoi to his Highness the Grand Vizier.

Some of these were directed against the Pasha, the Bishop, the Mudir, and the authorities, but the greatest part of them were claims against one another for sums varying from 30,000 to 30 piastres. A Commission was appointed for the examination of these various lawsuits, and the poorest man's claim as well as the richest has not been neglected. Zeinel Pasha, the Mudirs of Berkowatz and Scharkoi, the Tapu Mamur, Krainili, a Christian member of the Medjlis, Yusuf Aga, a Bey at Berkowatz, Dulep Aga, and Rougel, the tithe collectors, have all been found guilty of various acts of peculation, made to re-pay to the claimants the money which they had illegally taken from them, and sent as prisoners to Nisch. The Bishop of Scharkoi has also been tried by a Commission of Bishops, convicted of the most serious crimes, and sent in arrest to Constantinople. Thus has the Augæan stable of Scharkoi been swept of its nuisances by the Grand Vizier, and justice, although delayed for a lengthened period, has at last fallen rapidly and severely on the heads of offenders.

Since the Grand Vizier's arrival at Nisch, neither time nor pains have been spared by himself and his Commission in pulling down the old and rebuilding a new administration. The members of all the old Courts at this place, as well as at Leskowatz, Dubnitza, and Jhuna, have been dismissed from their offices.

Full authority has now been granted to the Pasha to hang all persons found guilty of brigandage. The police have also received instructions to shoot those who are found engaged in acts of brigandage. The "tcharak mirisi," or sandal tax, which was exacted from people at Leskowatz and pressed greatly upon the poor, has been abolished. An order has been issued that no tax should be taken from any pig unless he had arrived at the age of one year. Christian evidence has been accepted in every case by the present Commission, and the Municipal Council and Police Court have also been enjoined to admit Christian evidence on all occasions.

The Muhasibaji or Accountant-General of the province has been imprisoned for accepting a bribe of 5,000 piastres from a Jewish tithe-collector. Zeinel Pasha and his secretary, as well as the Mudirs of Berkowatz and Scharkoi, have been made refund to people in this district, also, numerous sums which they had received by way of bribes, and are still in arrest. The Iltizamjis, or tithe-collectors, both Christians and Mussulmans, have not escaped the punishment they merited. Some brigands have been killed, and others taken; in short few have been able to escape the rigour of the law. I must, however, here remark that although there were numerous complaints brought against the Turkish authorities for peculation, although there were many legal cases brought forward which had remained unsettled during the administration of Zeinel Pasha, yet I fully and conscientiously believe that each person's complaint had a fair and impartial hearing.

But with all this mass of claimants, and notwithstanding his Highness has made it publicly known that any case of proselytism will be examined with the strictest justice, not one person has as yet been able in this province to establish the fact of any person, boy or girl, having been forced to become Mussulman. Several petitions have been presented, complaining of the abuses of the gospodars or landlords; most of these complaints have, however, been proved to have been urged without the slightest foundation, and the horrors and abuses supposed to have been committed by all Mussulman landlords in the district of Nisch seem to have existed but in the heated imagination of those who wished to usurp their lands. One landlord, Yusuf Aga, in the district of Berkowatz, was found guilty of ill-treating his tenantry and imprisoned.

To put an end to the existing disputes between landlord and tenant, his Highness the Grand Vizier has ordered a Firman or Imperial Decree to be translated into Bulgarian, and to be read to the people, explaining and defining both the rights of the tenants as well as those of the landlords.

Such is a detailed account of the crimes and misdemeanours which his Highness the Grand Vizier has thought advisable to punish on the spot; such are the reforms which his Highness has deemed right to establish for the immediate benefit of the administration of this province: but his work has not stopped here, for I understand that he has drawn the attention of the Porte more particularly to the difficulties caused by the present system of the collection of the tithes and other taxes, to the exactions of the clergy, and the oppression of the people by the police; so that there is no doubt that ere long a great reform will be observable in many of those evils which now weigh heavily and unevenly on the country.

The task which the Grand Vizier has had to perform, to investigate the affairs and redress the grievances of this province, has indeed been most arduous; he has, however, accomplished it with energy, justice, and impartiality.

(Signed) G. T. RICKETTS.

No. 17.

Consul Skene to Lord J. Russell.—(Received September 6.)

(No. 49.)

My Lord, *Aleppo, August* 18, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your Lordship's information, a copy of my report of this day's date to Her Majesty's Embassy on the state of affairs at Aleppo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. SKENE.

Inclosure in No. 17.

Consul Skene to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Aleppo, August* 18, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the arrival from Kharput of Hafiz Pasha with about 2,000 Regulars, and the departure for Damascus of Omer Pasha at the head of 800 men. With the troops previously here the garrison of Aleppo is thus about 2,500 strong.

No new appearance of danger here has arisen since I last addressed your Excellency. The employment of an auxiliary force of 500 picked men from the best class of the Mussulman population, for the maintenance of order in the town, and the other measures reported in my despatches of June 28 and 30, and July 21, 1860, continue to produce excellent results. In addition to these measures, which I have the satisfaction of reflecting were adopted on my urgent recommendation, I have had all the shops closed where wine and spirits were sold by Ionians and Maltese, and thus drunken brawls, formerly of frequent occurrence, have ceased to offer an opportunity for tumults and outbreaks. Attempts have been repeatedly made to raise an insurrection, and one of them was precisely of the same nature as that which succeeded at Damascus, namely, the tying of crosses on dogs in the streets, while respectable Christians were forced to walk in the gutter, and were occasionally beaten without provocation; yet vigilance on the part of Ramadan Aga, the chief of the auxiliary force, and of his subordinates, succeeded in checking further manifestations of hostile feeling between the Mussulmans and Christians.

The intelligence of the expected arrival of foreign troops in Syria has been received with displeasure by the Mahometan population, but it has produced as much fear as anger, and resentment is expressed more against the Sultan for consenting to an intervention than against European Powers for proposing it.

Each post from Damascus, however, brings tidings of energetic steps taken by Fuad Pasha, and as long as the salutary impression thereby created is felt, and repressive measures are persevered in, it is thought that public tranquillity may not be disturbed at Aleppo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. SKENE.

No. 18.

Consul Sandison to Lord J. Russell.—(Received September 14.)

(No. 27.)

My Lord, *Brussa, August* 20, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Tidjaret, or Mercantile Court here, has been re-organised according to Circular orders from the Porte, with a President, Vice-President, and two Members, also a Clerk and Messenger to be paid. Those two members to receive 500 piastres, or about 4*l.* 10*s.* a-month, and two others to serve gratis. A deputy from the different Consulates will be invited to attend, to be selected by them, in rotation, every three months. The selection of the permanent members has been made, and the list sent to the Porte for its approbation. The new tribunal will be empowered to decide all

manner of civil suits, save relating to divorce and some other trivial matters between Mussulmans, which is all then left to be judged at the Mehkemeh.

As all testimony will be received indiscriminately with reference to the religion of the witnesses and parties before the Court, and its proceedings are to be regulated by general principles of European law or equity, this will place Christians on a par with Mussulmans, doing away with the previous grievance in that respect, and affording greater facilities for the dispensation of justice. Practically that will much depend on the impartiality of the Court, by which, as hitherto constituted, it has seldom been exhibited.

But the extension of such tribunals to the large towns in the interior is postponed indefinitely, though stated to be intended hereafter, so that the benefits of the new system are very confined and not accessible to the general population of the country. It likewise remains to be seen how far the municipal Medjlis may continue to appropriate to itself the judgment of causes, the present practice in that respect being very loose and irregular, so as, in many instances, to rest at its discretion.

I have, &c.
(Signed) D. SANDISON.

No. 19.

Consul Blunt to Lord J. Russell.—(Received September 22.)

(No. 57.)

My Lord, *Smyrna, September* 12, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship, inclosed, the copy of a despatch which I have this day addressed to his Excellency Sir Henry L. Bulwer, G.C.B., relating to a most unfortunate dispute which took place in that town, on Sunday night last, between the Greeks of the country and the police, in which four of the Turkish guard were wounded and two Greeks, also one of the latter accidentally killed.

The affair originated in an imprudent measure taken by the officer in charge of the police guard, but as there are many people in Smyrna who most unfoundedly attribute the dispute to a premeditated act on the part of the Turks, it will doubtless be reported in that light in the papers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHAS. BLUNT.

Inclosure in No. 19.

Consul Blunt to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Smyrna, September* 12, 1860.

I REGRET having to report to your Excellency that a serious dispute took place in this town on Sunday night last, the 9th instant, between the Greeks, (Rayahs) and the police, in which four Turks (Zaptiehs) were wounded, and two Greeks, and one of the latter killed.

It is difficult to arrive at facts in instances of the kind, and more particularly at the present period, when both Greeks and Turks are still, owing to the late events in Syria, under a certain degree of excitation. I have, however, every reason to believe the following details to be correct.

Sunday last the 9th instant was the Greek festival of St. John, which is usually kept up till long after midnight, and the coffee-houses in the mahallah or district are always allowed by the authorities to remain open till near daylight; but, on the celebration of the fête on Sunday last, a police guard of seven men, under the command of a certain Redjeb, a Moriotte Turk, passed a little before midnight ordering the people to close their coffee-houses, and extinguish their paper lanterns, upon the plea that they would catch light and burn the town. The coffee-house people, considering the order as an infringement upon ancient usages and *quasi* privileges, opposed, when the guard entered a coffee-house to extinguish the lights, and there found a well-known desperate individual named Barrillier (formerly under French protection) against whom there is a long

catalogue of crimes of every description, who has hitherto always either evaded or escaped from the police. When the guards seized this desperate individual, he both resisted and cried for help, which his friends and relations readily gave, and ultimately released him, but not before he had received two deep sabre-cuts in the neck. It was upon the police meeting with resistance that the first shot was fired, the which, most unhappily, killed a poor Greek from Aivalie, who had come to Smyrna to celebrate the festival, and was outside, but in no way connected with the dispute. The Greeks then ran to their houses for fire-arms, when about fifteen shots were fired, the Greeks firing upon the guards, and the latter firing in the air: but, before the Greeks came up with their fire-arms, several of the police were also severely hurt by the chairs and stools thrown at them by the Greeks. Four of the police being wounded, the other three severely hurt, and Barrillier liberated, the guard then retired with Redjeb, to report the case to the Pasha, and the crowd of Greeks dispersed.

The dispute took place in the front of a military guard-house, but the officer on guard would not allow any of his men to interfere. Such, I have every confidence in assuring your Excellency to be a correct version of the dispute.

I cannot pretend to deny the police the right of defending themselves when attacked in the performance of their duty, but I may be permitted to observe that the Moriotte exceeded his duty in ordering the coffee-houses to be closed without special instructions for the occasion in question. Further, why should he, Redjeb, avail himself of such a moment to seize Barrillier, when, if the police did their duty, they might seize him at any hour in the day, without either the risk of opposition or killing and wounding people? His Excellency Ahmet Kyserlie Pasha ordered his arrest: he was seized but was allowed to escape, when he was secreted till the Pasha's departure.

The most exaggerated reports will doubtless be circulated in connection with this unfortunate dispute, which will at the same time, as it is here, be attributed to premeditation on the part of the Turks, but such, I must say, is most unfounded, for were that the case, there would have been other Turks present, whereas there were only seven, amongst several hundred Greeks; and a further reason for rejecting such an insinuation is the fact, that most of the shots fired by the police were in the air, whereas, resisted as they were, had there been any premeditation, they would have fired at the dense mass of Greeks collected on the spot.

During the short period that Ahmet Kyserlie Pasha was at Smyrna there was the celebration of the festival of Prophet Elia, and his Excellency was present there the whole day, and his being so was both appreciated by the respectable Greeks, and acted as a check upon the evil-disposed; the result was that the fete was celebrated without any disputes, whereas on previous occasions it was never celebrated without some serious dispute, in which there was always some one either killed or wounded.

I must be permitted to state to your Excellency that I consider it was most decidedly the Pasha's duty, either to have been in the vicinity or to have directed the Chief of the Police to be there during the nocturnal celebration of the late festival of St. John; had such precautions been taken no dispute would have arisen.

I have had a long interview with his Excellency Osman Pasha in reference to this unfortunate dispute, and was surprised to learn that he had not written to inform the several Sub-Governors within his jurisdiction of what really did take place on Sunday night last. I therefore urged the Pasha to do so without delay, for most exaggerated reports will be sent into the interior, which may be availed of by some of the more fanatical Turks in those districts for reprisals against the Christians.

I regret to say that in this private interview which I had with Osman Pasha I found him fearful of exercising his authority, saying that "it was not the time to use harsh measures," and upon my expressing my surprise at his making such an observation he requested me to advise him.

I told his Excellency that he should be both just and energetic like his predecessor Ahmet Kyserlie Pasha; he would then be supported by the Consuls, and at the same time respected by all the better class of the inhabitants, and feared by the bad. I also remarked that he must already have found the present inhabitants of Smyrna, particularly the artisans, to be a very different class to those whom he had to govern in 1845; and that if he left everything to his

subordinates, and did not appear more in public to convince people he was watchful of his orders being carried out, he would most probably have to regret frequent renewals of what took place on Sunday last.

His Excellency thanked me for my advice, assuring me at the same time that he would follow it; but I much fear, from Osman Pasha's well-known want of energy, that my advice will not have much weight with him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHAS. BLUNT.

No. 20.

Consul Holmes to Lord J. Russell.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 51.)

My Lord, *Bosna Serai, September 3, 1860.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your Lordship's information, copy of a despatch, dated the 1st of September, which, in reply to his Excellency's circular of the 6th August, I have addressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, regarding the state of affairs here, the character and conduct of the local functionaries, and the policy pursued by the foreign Consuls.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. R. HOLMES.

Inclosure in No. 20.

Consul Holmes to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Bosna Serai, September 1, 1860.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's circular of the 6th August.

A few days after my arrival here I wrote a despatch dated the 18th August regarding the state of affairs in this Pashalic, from which you will have perceived that a good deal of alarm and excitement prevails. Since that date I have had further opportunities of observation, and I quite agree with the first paragraph of your Excellency's circular that there is here, at present, no deliberate intention, though the desire may perhaps exist, on the part of the Mussulman population, to assault the lives or property of the Christian population; and I believe also that the chief danger lies in the agitated state of the public mind, of which, unfortunately, there is no doubt, and in connection with which the smallest accident may, at any moment, produce the most serious results. The process which engenders this dangerous condition is precisely that described by your Excellency. In addition to real causes of complaint every little accident is magnified into a premeditated crime; and dismal stories, no doubt often invented and industriously circulated by foreign agents, are not wanting to increase the existing alarm.

Since I have been here I have not heard much of Mussulman oppression in the town. This, I am told, is partly to be attributed to the expected visit of the Grand Vizier. The troops seem very orderly, and I hear no complaints of their conduct, and altogether—though I hazard any opinion at such a critical moment with hesitation—I think that there is no danger of any outbreak of Moslem fanaticism, provided that the Christians of Servia and Montenegro fail in their constant endeavours to excite the Bosniac Christians to rise, that the progress of revolt in the Herzegovine be checked, and also that the punishment of the chief criminals in Syria be speedy and commensurate with the enormity of their crimes.

I am glad to know that it is Mr. Consul-General Longworth's opinion that the movement in Servia is of less importance than is imagined here, and is confined to merely a few hundred of the rabble. If this be the case, there is little danger to be feared from that quarter, as the Bosniac Christians are not likely to risk their lives and property in a rising, unless supported by such aid from Servia as to make success certain. From Montenegro and the Herzegovine, perhaps, the greatest danger is to be apprehended; but, with the thirteen

battalions of regular troops now in the latter province, besides Irregulars, were they commanded by a competent and trustworthy officer, there ought to be little or no difficulty in restoring tranquillity.

There is one peculiarity regarding the Moslem population of this province of which your Excellency is probably aware, in which ought to lie an element of safety to a certain extent, and that is, that there is no sympathy between the native Mussulmans and their Osmanli rulers. Ever since the conquest of Bosnia by the Turks, the natives, both those who remained Christians and those who accepted Islamism, have maintained a hatred of all officials, or Turks in general, from Constantinople, and the latter will hardly admit them as co-religionists. Up to 1850, when Omer Pasha was sent here, the inhabitants of this province were only nominally under Turkish rule; and the fact of their having been then almost re-conquered, and rather roughly treated in the process, has not tended to diminish their antipathy. Thus, in case of an attack on the Christians, the Bosniac Moslems dare not count on the forbearance of the Sultan's functionaries or troops, while the latter feel that they are objects of peculiar aversion on the part of the Bosniacs. All this, however, might have been said of the Druses. The Christians hate both parties, but there is no doubt that their most bitter complaints are directed against those who should be their protectors—the Pashas, Medjlises, and Government officials. To the conduct of her functionaries in the provinces the attention of the Porte is urgently required; various reforms are needed, and, among others, I am certain that the re-organization of the Medjlises on the elective principle, and with a proper proportion of Christian members, as proposed by Mr. Vice-Consul Zohrab in his answers to your Excellency's questions, would give great satisfaction, and probably tend to remove many causes of complaint.

Your Excellency desires to be informed as to the conduct and character of the functionaries placed here; but being scarcely able to form an opinion of my own, owing to my very recent arrival, I cannot do better than to refer to the following extracts from Mr. Vice-Consul Zohrab's despatch, regarding the present Governor-General and the Medjlis:—

"The nomination of Osman Pasha to the Government of this province was viewed with surprise and regret by those who had the welfare of the province at heart, while the Mussulman Bosniacs regarded his advent with unfeigned delight. Ten months' experience has fully borne out the fears and hopes of both parties.

"Osman Pasha is a native of Bosnia: he is very old and infirm, and although a kindly-disposed man, is too feeble and apathetic to exert himself in correcting or preventing abuses.

"Surrounded by old friends and relatives, who are, without exception, fanatical and strongly attached to the old system of government, and whose influence with his Excellency is paramount, Osman Pasha has become a mere cypher in their hands. The policy of the Government has consequently become quite reactionary; that is, tending to the establishing of the authority of the Bosniac Beys and the withdrawal of the few privileges enjoyed by the Christians. The Mudirs of nearly every sub-district in the province have been dismissed, and their places filled by relatives of the Pasha, by Bosniacs, and by Turks who, though not native Bosniacs, have imbibed Bosniac ideas from long residence and marriages into native families."

"The Medjlis of this town is guided by the laws of the Koran. The Judge of the Mehkemeh is a permanent member of it, and his opinion is decisive. The Tanzimat is disregarded, and the majority of causes are referred to the Mehkemeh for trial."

I would also beg your Excellency's attention to one more extract from the same despatch, relating to the imprudent permission accorded by the Porte to the exiled native Beys to return to Bosnia.

"A step very prejudicial to its interests has been adopted by the Porte. The rebel Pashas and Beys who were sent from this by Omer Pasha to Constantinople in chains, and who were condemned to perpetual exile by the Government, have received permission to return hither, many having already done so, and are now enjoying the confidence and favour of Osman Pasha.

"The influence of the Central Government is daily becoming weaker, while the pride and fanaticism of the Bosniac Mussulmans is rapidly developing itself. Such a disregard to its interests will eventually bring against the Porte two formidable antagonists,—the Christians, who have given up all hope of amelioration of their position under the present régime, and who are daily subjected to fresh hardships, and the Mussulmans, who look upon the Government of the Sultan with disdain. The presence of an energetic and honest Governor is urgently required in Bosnia. Such a man could render valuable service in re-establishing order and in removing many of the causes of irritation; but if the Porte persists in sending Pashas without regard to their capabilities, disgrace and misfortune must necessarily follow."

The Ferik, Mustafa Pasha, commanding the troops here, seems to be a good-natured, well-intentioned man, and appears to do his duty to the best of his ability, and not to interfere with that of others.

With regard to the conduct of the foreign Consuls here, I may observe that my French colleague seems to act much as I am instructed to do. He endeavours to allay exaggerated apprehensions, and to report the simple truth of what occurs, as far as he is able to ascertain it. He, however, considers the position of affairs here as most precarious.

The Russian Consulate, I am told, is the constant resort of the Greek clergy. From this quarter political pamphlets have been distributed, tending to excite the Christian population; and there is no doubt that its conduct is inspired by instructions quite the reverse of those contained in your Excellency's Circular.

Of all the European Powers, Austria has the greatest interest in Bosnia. She has several thousands of undoubted subjects residing in it, and there are thousands more, who, many years ago, migrated to this province, married and settled here, and who, until lately, have been considered as Turkish subjects, she also desires to claim. I imagine that the first plausible occasion for occupation would be seized by this Power with avidity. The possession of the Herzegovine and Bosnia by Austria would remove the question of the port of Klek, in which she is deeply interested, while the whole of the supplies for the rocky province of Dalmatia are drawn from Bosnia. The conduct of the Austrian Consulate-General here is therefore in accordance with the end desired. This establishment is large and costly, and the rank of the officer at its head, and the vicinity of Austria, gives him a preponderance over the other Consuls. The fact of the Catholics looking up to Austria and the Greeks to Russia as their religious protectors, gives the officers of these Powers, also, an immense facility for carrying out their policy, which it is difficult for the Consuls of England and France to combat, more particularly as they hold an inferior rank to their Austrian colleague.

In conclusion, I have to assure your Excellency that I shall endeavour scrupulously to carry out the suggestions conveyed to me in the body of the Circular to which I have now replied; and I trust that my conduct, under all circumstances, will obtain your Excellency's approbation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. R. HOLMES.

No. 21.

Consul-General Moore to Lord J. Russell.—(*Received October* 2.)

(No. 42.)

My Lord, *Beyrout, September* 10, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of my despatch of this date to his Excellency Sir Henry Bulwer, transmitting replies to his Excellency's queries relative to the Provincial Administration of the Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. MOORE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 21.

Consul-General Moore to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir, *Beyrout, September* 10, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith my replies to the queries addressed to me by your Excellency in your circular of the 11th June, relating to the Provincial Administration of the Porte.

I beg to apologize for the delay which has arisen in transmitting my answers, recent events having necessarily absorbed all my attention, and even now compel me to be somewhat brief. The replies have reference to the normal state of things in this Consular district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. MOORE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 21.

Answers to Queries.

1. AS compared with a European standard, or with what it might have been brought to, the condition of the country comprised within this Consular district (the town and plain of Beyrout and Mount Lebanon) is very backward; but measured with some other parts of the Turkish Empire, it was, on the whole, before the outbreak of the present civil war in the Mountain, prosperous and progressive.

2. Christians about .. .. 150,000 souls.
Mussulman .. .. .. 20,000 „
Metwali (Sheïte Mahometans) .. 5,000 „
Druses .. .. .. 30,000 „

3. There being but a small number of Mahometans in the Lebanon, there remain only the town and plain of Beyrout to be considered. The occupation and position in life of Christians and Mussulmans are alike; they are respectively proprietors, merchants, and tradespeople.

4. Yes; they can hold landed property on perfectly equal conditions.

5. Yes; they can do so on equal terms.

6. There are no purely Mussulman villages in the Lebanon; in the few mixed villages the Christian is as well off as the Mahometan peasantry.

7. Christian evidence is admitted in the mixed Tribunals (those composed of Christian and Mussulman members), but not in the purely Turkish Court called the Mehkemeh, or in the Grand Medjlis of the Eyalet when it is presided over by the Cadi, and where the law may be administered according to the Shará (Mahometan Ecclesiastical Law). In case of murder, for instance, when the murderer is a Moslem, that presidency and that law are resorted to, and Christian evidence would be rejected. No such case having occurred for many years, I am unable to furnish instances. Petty criminal cases are tried at the Medjlis Tahkik (Court of Verification), and civil suits at the Commercial Courts, both mixed Tribunals where Christian evidence is accepted.

8. Most decidedly so.

9. The inequalities dependent on religion now are the non-admission of Christians to superior public offices and to the army, and the non-acceptance of Christian evidence as specified in answer to Query 7. What the Christians have to complain of is by no means so much any inequalities or burdens sanctioned by law, as abuses of power on the part of the authorities springing either from fanaticism or sectarian partiality.

10. I think they would prefer entering the army to paying the tax, if there could be enrolled purely Christian regiments, officered by Christians; but they much prefer paying the tax to serving in the army with the condition of being drafted into Turkish regiments with Turkish officers. They would gain most, I conceive, by entering the army under the former arrangement than by paying the tax.

11. To build a church, permission to do so by a firman from the Porte must first be obtained; the Christians find no difficulty in following their religious observances.

12. When such cases occur it is by the act of the Government.

13. Protestants are not unfrequently annoyed and ill-treated; the persecution proceeds from other Christian sects through the Turkish authorities, whom, being more numerous, wealthy, and influential, they find means of gaining over to their purposes.

14. Such complaint is frequently made, but those authorities, on the other hand, plead, and often with justice, that they act under moral compulsion; this cannot be otherwise so long as their tenure of office depends, as it now does, on the pleasure of the Turkish authorities.

15. Christians are admitted into the Medjlis. I do not think that these Councils, so far as their president, who is a Turkish official, and Mahometan members are concerned, are at all more favourable to progress and good government than the Pasha would be. Any efforts of the Christian members in those directions would thus be neutralized.

16. The power of these Councils is little better than nominal; they take their cue, to a very great extent, from the governing Pasha, whom they dare not displease, and upon whom, in reality, all depends.

17. See preceding answer.

18. They do not evince, by open acts at least, a strong desire to make converts—they have never done so by compulsion.

19. Such cases are of rare occurrence here. In the two or three that have occurred in my time the motives have been worldly, such as the desire to marry a particular man who was a Mohometan, to escape family persecution, and the like.

20. The forms of justice here are both simple and inexpensive; what is required to ensure prompt and equal justice is honesty of purpose on the part of the Pasha and judges, with, of course, the unqualified and universal admission of Christian evidence.

21. Those affording greater security to life and property than at present exists, and the certainty of prompt and equal justice in order to consolidate that public confidence which engenders encouragement to undertake those enterprizes, cultivate those arts and develop those resources which contribute to constitute the happiness and greatness of a nation. As to the attainment of these objects that must depend, under the present form of government in Turkey, upon the individual fitness, integrity, and capacity of the local Governor.

22. It is undoubtedly possible to establish such schools. As to the effect that would be produced, the spread of education and enlightenment cannot be otherwise than beneficial.

23. I think the measure would be illusory and futile. The Christian Vice-Governor would be a mere cypher locally, and, as to his representations to the Porte, it is hardly to be supposed they will be listened to.

24. I certainly think such agency has been and is at work with that view. The question is one, however, which, from its very nature, it is most difficult to illustrate by instances, when the means employed are not open and patent, though under cover of specious pretexts. The only instance I can signalize is the proceedings of certain foreign agents in the matter of the Calendar, reported in my despatches.

25. Yes, all who can get foreign passports. At Beyrout some eight or ten Rayahs have procured foreign passports and become subjects of the Powers granting them. Of the latter mode of procedure no instances have occurred here that I am aware of.

No. 22.

Consul Holmes to Lord J. Russell.—(Received at Coburg, October 6.)

(No. 61.)
My Lord, *Bosna Serai, September* 26, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, for your Lordship's information, copy of a despatch which I have addressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador